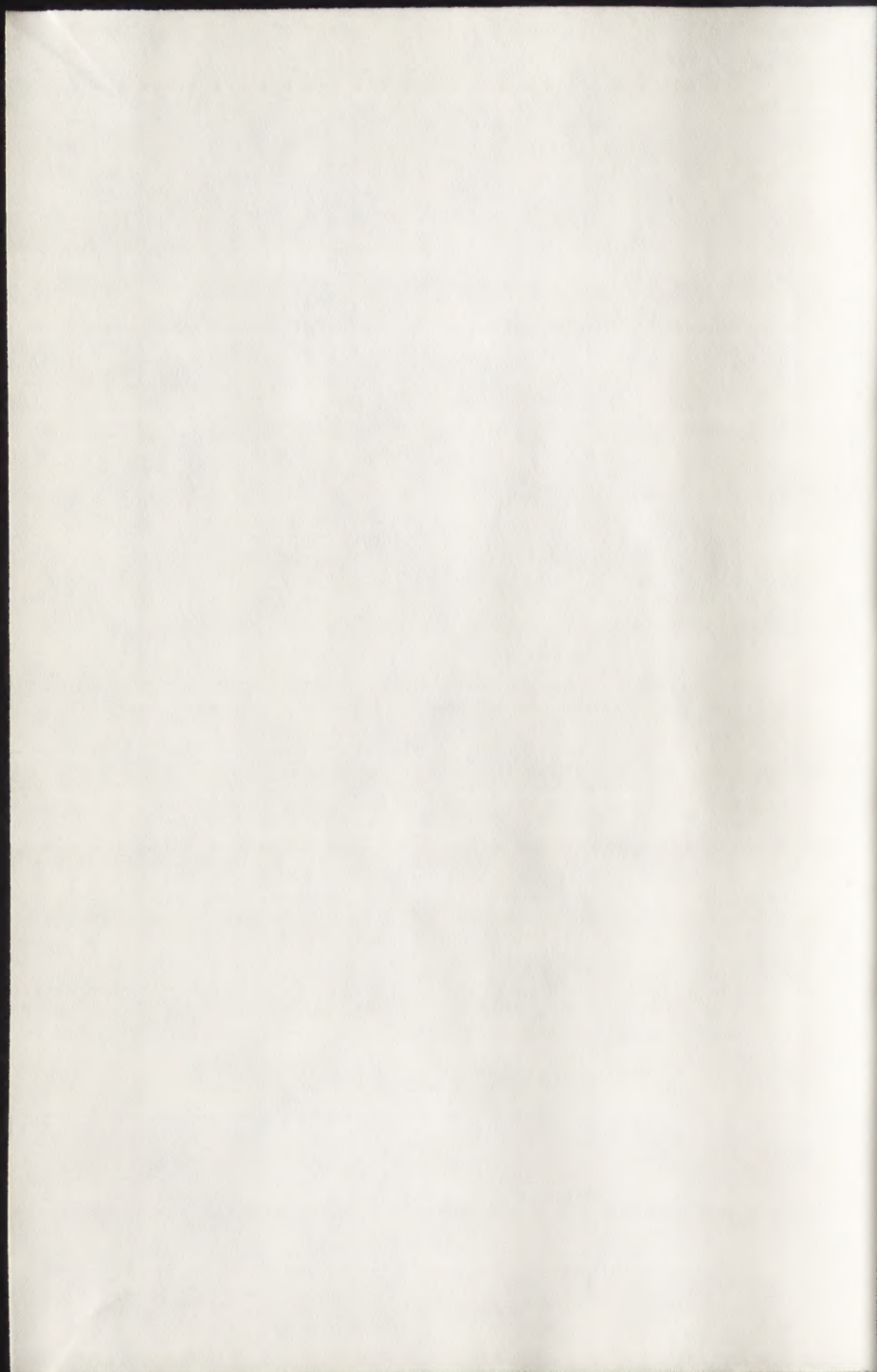
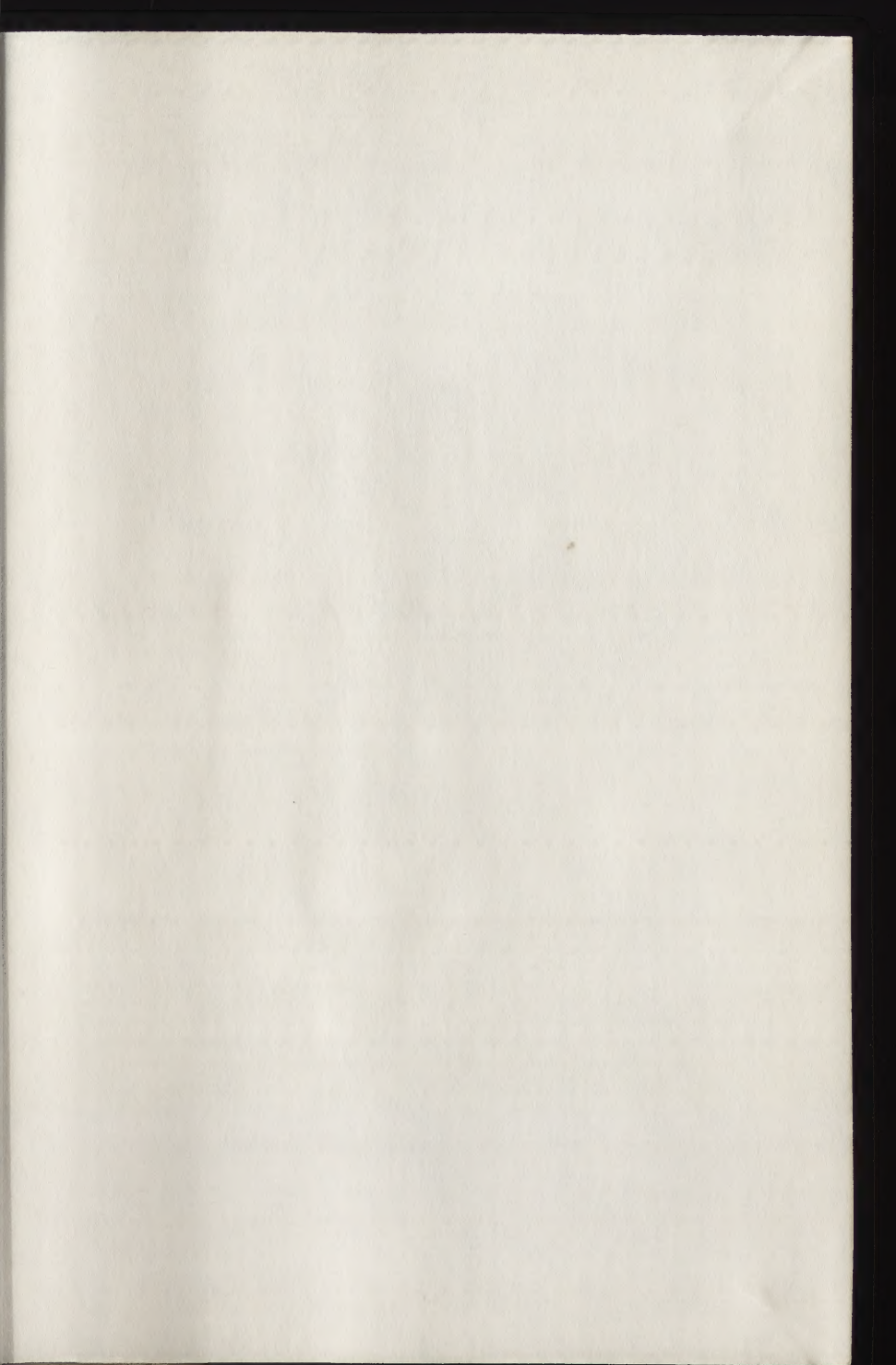
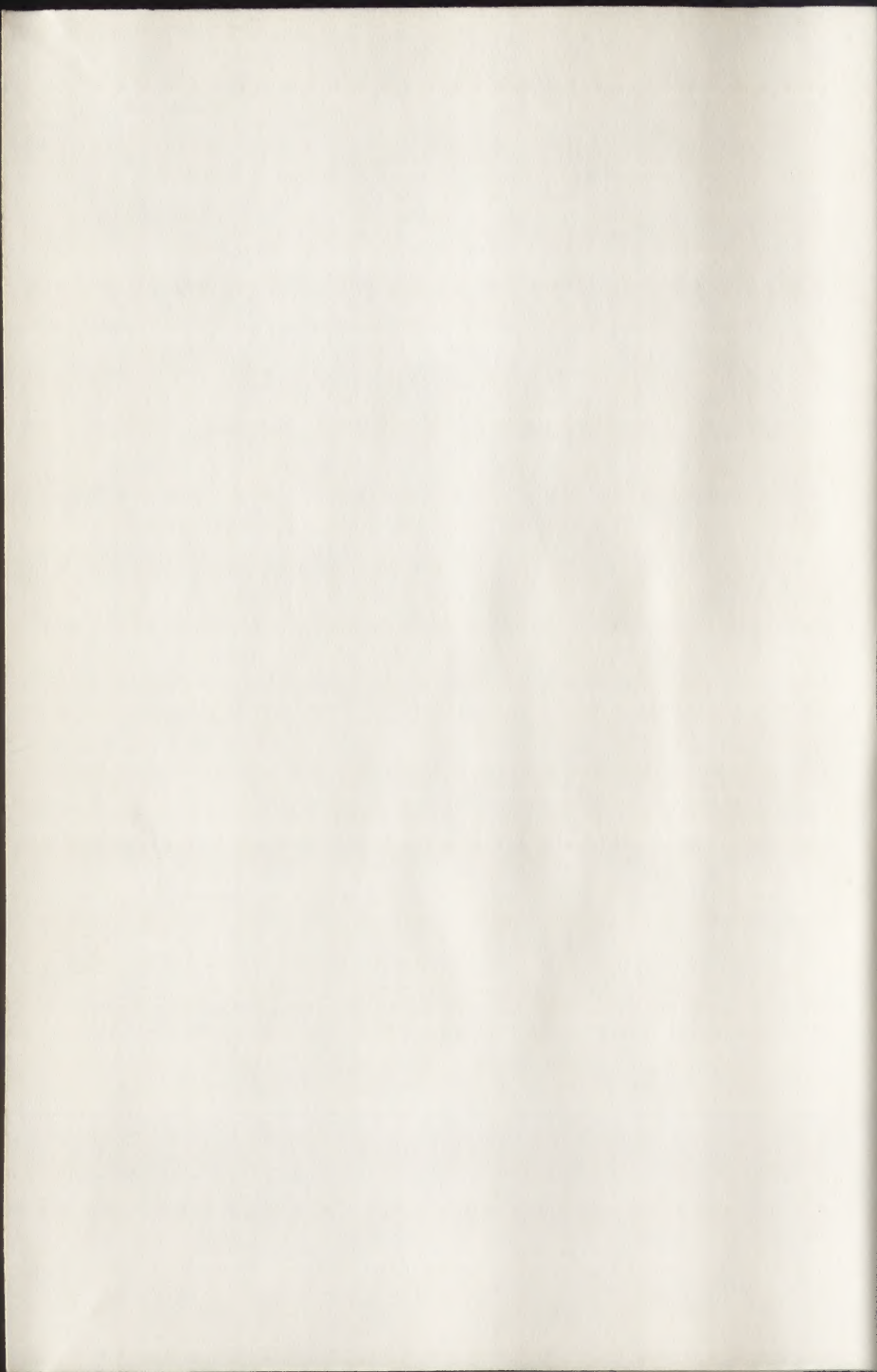


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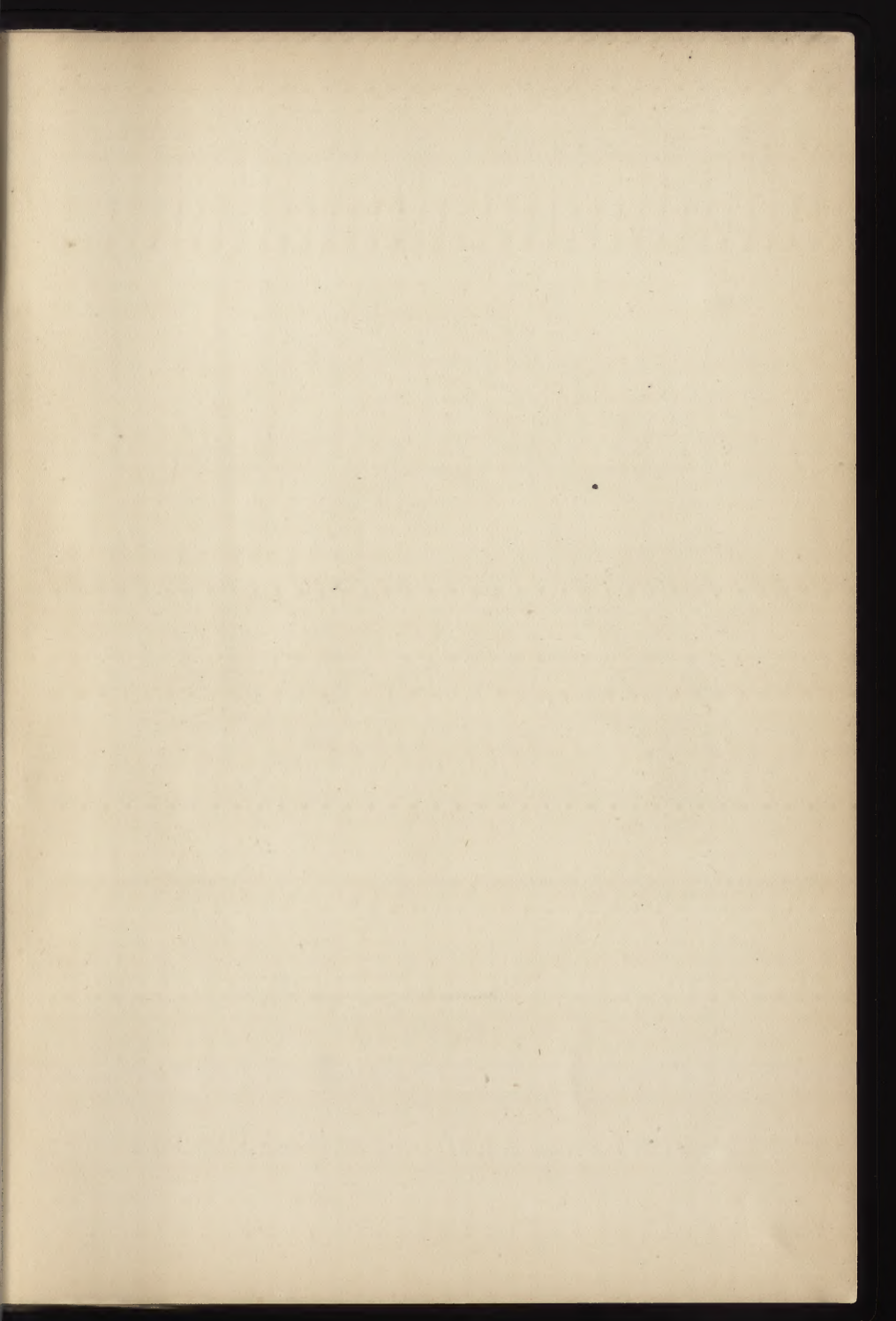
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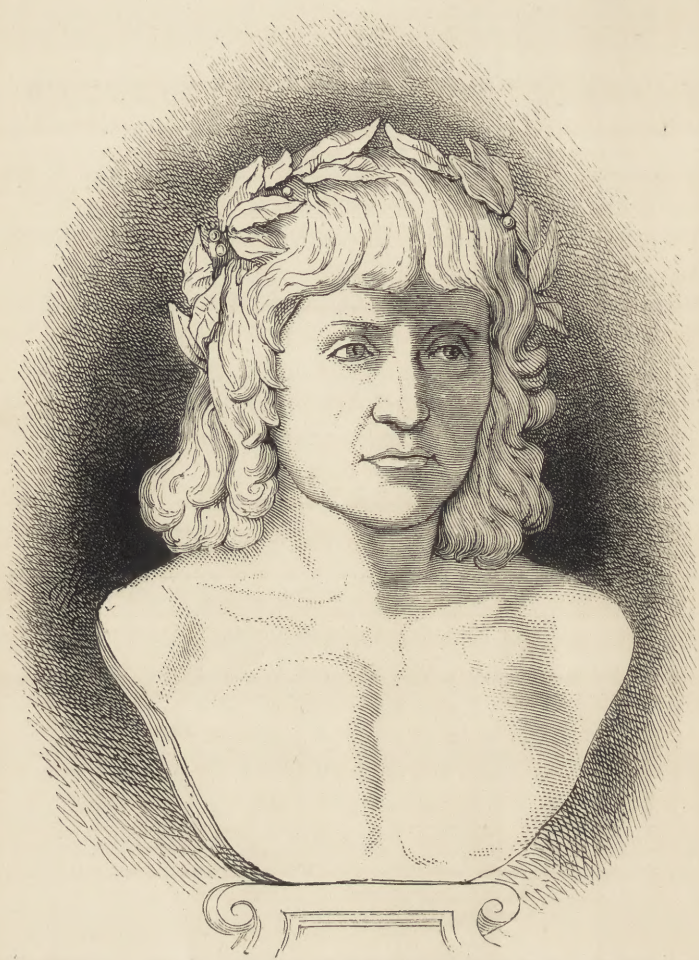
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PREFACE.

ALTHOUGH no separate biography of Mantegna has been published in England, his life and works have been the subject of much study in other countries during recent years. The thanks of the writer are especially due to Dr. Woltmann, the author of the biography of the painter in Dr. Robert Dohme's "Kunst und Künstler," to M. Armand Baschet, Canonico Willelmo Braghirolli, and Dr. Karl Brun. It is to be hoped that before long the last-named of these scholars will give the result of his researches to the public in a complete work on this remarkable man, who was both one of the greatest artists and one of the most striking personalities of the Renaissance.

With regard to Francia, materials for the history of his life are far less plentiful, and are to be found almost exclusively in the works of Bolognese writers, of whom Malvasia and Calvi are the fullest and most trustworthy. In offering this little work as a guide for the use of those who have not the opportunity of studying the master's works for themselves the author has only to add that the pictures mentioned have been carefully examined, and their descriptions written on the spot.

J. M. C.

288



CONTENTS.

MANTEGNA.

CHAPTER I.

	PAGE
EARLY YEARS AND WORK AT PADUA. A.D. 1431—1457 . . .	1

CHAPTER II.

WORK AT VERONA AND MANTUA. A.D. 1457—1470. . .	12
--	----

CHAPTER III.

THE CAMERA DEGLI SPOSI. A.D. 1470—1474	21
--	----

CHAPTER IV.

WORK AT MANTUA AND ROME. ENGRAVINGS A.D. 1474—1490	29
--	----

CHAPTER V.

THE TRIUMPHS OF JULIUS CÆSAR. DRAWINGS, A.D. 1490—1500	38
--	----

CHAPTER VI.

LAST WORKS AND DEATH—HIS INFLUENCE ON ART. A.D. 1500 —1506.	50
--	----

FRANCIA.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY ART IN BOLOGNA. A.D. 1300—1450	PAGE 65
--	------------

CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE AND WORKS. A.D. 1450—1500	75
--	----

CHAPTER III.

THE FRIENDSHIP AND INFLUENCE OF RAPHAEL. A.D. 1500—1506	86
---	----

CHAPTER IV.

THE FRESCOES OF ST. CECILIA'S CHAPEL. A.D. 1506—1509	94
--	----

CHAPTER V.

LAST WORKS AND DEATH. A.D. 1509—1517	102
--	-----

THE PRINCIPAL WORKS OF MANTEGNA	109
THE PRINCIPAL WORKS OF FRANCIA	114
CHRONOLOGY	119
BIBLIOGRAPHY	121
INDEX	122



LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

MANTEGNA.

	PAGE
BUST PORTRAIT OF MANTEGNA	<i>Frontispiece</i>
MEETING OF LODOVICO GONZAGA AND HIS SON, THE CARDINAL FRANCESCO	26
THE ENTOMBMENT (<i>engraving</i>)	35
JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOFERNES (<i>drawing</i>)	37
PART OF THE TRIUMPHS OF JULIUS CÆSAR	42
THE MADONNA DELLA VITTORIA	46
VIRGIN AND CHILD WITH ST. JOHN AND THE MAGDALEN	48
THE CRUCIFIXION	58

FRANCIA.

PORTRAIT OF FRANCIA	<i>Frontispiece</i>
THE VIRGIN ENTHRONED WITH SAINTS	80
MADONNA AND CHILD WITH THE BIRD	85
DEPOSITION FROM THE CROSS	89
A PIETÀ	91
THE MADONNA OF THE ROSE-GARDEN	101



ANDREA MANTEGNA.

CHAPTER I.

EARLY YEARS AND WORK AT PADUA, A.D. 1431—1457.

AMONG the different schools of painting which flourished on the mainland of North Italy during the fifteenth century, that of Padua was the only one which attained more than a merely local importance. Independent of Byzantine traditions and strikingly peculiar in its characteristics, it rivalled for a time and even surpassed the Venetian school in the vigour and individuality of its art.

A Paduan by birth, Andrea Mantegna became the greatest master of his day, and left the stamp of his powerful genius not only on the schools of neighbouring cities, but on the whole artistic world. By his own achievements, and still more by the greatness of his aims, he stands foremost among the men of his generation who carried on the work of the Renaissance and prepared the way for the splendid age that was to follow.

This development was the more remarkable, because until the fifteenth century we do not hear of a single Paduan artist of note. Giotto had left the frescoes of the Arena Chapel within the walls of the "learned city," and

Umbrian influences had later reached her students through Gentile da Fabriano, but these seeds were slow in bearing fruit. The men who painted in the famous basilica of Sant' Antonio were mostly foreigners. Jacopo d'Avanzo and Altichieri of Verona, Giusto of Florence, belonged to other Italian cities, and although a Paduan guild existed and increased steadily in numbers the results were poor, and the few works which its members produced were feeble imitations of Giottesque or Umbrian originals.

The first to raise Paduan art out of obscurity was Francesco Squarcione, who, although "not the best of artists himself," undoubtedly gave a new direction to painting in his native city, and in a measure earned the title of founder of the school, which has been liberally bestowed upon him. Born in 1394, and by profession a tailor and embroiderer, Squarcione early devoted himself to art, and having inherited some fortune from his father, spent his youth in travelling both in Italy and Greece.* During his travels he collected a considerable number of pictures, and made drawings and took casts of ancient marbles, which on his return to Padua he exhibited for the teaching of young artists. By these means he soon obtained great reputation as a master, and as many as a hundred and thirty-seven pupils, he himself tells us, were trained in his school.

A man of excellent judgment in art, but of slender powers of execution, who knew how to attract talented pupils to his studio, and who employed them in the production of works which bore his name, is the universal verdict passed upon Squarcione by early writers. The truth of this testimony is tolerably well proved by the curious difference of style visible in the only two authentic works of his that remain, an altar-piece in the gallery of Padua, and a Madonna painted for the Lazzara family. The former is a coarse and unpleasant work, with the hardness

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle doubt that he went to Greece.

of line and heavy colouring that mark Zoppo and the inferior Squarcionesques, while the latter in the dignity of its pose and careful modelling bears evident traces of Mantegna's hand. Squarcione no doubt possessed a quick eye for discerning talent, and it is his lasting claim on the gratitude of posterity that he at once saw and appreciated the rising genius of the young Mantegna.

Andrea Mantegna, the greatest of Lombard masters, was born in the neighbourhood of Padua in the year 1431. His father, Biagio, is supposed to have been a small farmer, and Vasari tells us that in his childhood Andrea herded cattle until Squarcione, struck by the boy's talent for drawing, adopted him as his own son.

In November, 1441, Mantegna's name is entered on the registers of the Paduan guild as Squarcione's foster-child, and seven years later he painted an altar-piece for the ancient church of Santa Sofia. Of this youthful work contemporaries speak with high praise as bearing marks of a practised hand, but it had already disappeared in the seventeenth century, and the earliest painting of Mantegna that now exists is the fresco above the portal of Sant' Antonio. In this lunette, which bears the date of 1452, the two saints Anthony and Bernardino are represented supporting the sacred monogram; but the figures are too much damaged to be a fair test of the young artist's style, and the work is chiefly interesting as a proof of the high reputation in which he was already held by his fellow-citizens.

It is to the frescoes of St. Cristoforo's chapel in the church of the Eremitani friars that we must turn in order to form a correct idea of Mantegna's powers during this time. Here we see him carrying the principles which he had learnt in Squarcione's workshop to their furthest limits, and with the boldness of genius venturing on new

and untried paths. Here too we find him painting side by side with the best of Squarcione's other pupils, and we have an opportunity of comparing his work with that of artists who had been formed on the same models.

This chapel, which stands to the right of the high altar, at the east end of the great Eremitani Church, belonged to the Ovetari family, whose last representative, dying in 1443, had left a sum of seven hundred gold ducats to be spent in decorating its walls with frescoes illustrating the history of St. James and St. Christopher. Squarcione received the commission from the dead man's heir, and between the years 1448 and 1458, the walls, apse, and ceiling were covered with frescoes by his different pupils.

Thus, only a few steps from the garden which encloses Giotto's Chapel, another great series was painted, to become for the schools of North Italy what the Brancacci Chapel had been for Florence.

Less fortunate than the celebrated frescoes of the Carmine, these paintings have suffered much from the damp of the walls, and a great part of the subjects in the apse, as well as several figures in the martyrdom and burial of St. Christopher, are completely destroyed. Other portions are still in good preservation, and afford excellent examples of the peculiarities of the Paduan school and the studies which laid the foundation of Mantegna's subsequent greatness.

The leading feature which marks the work of all Squarcione's scholars, and was to attain its highest artistic development in Mantegna's later conceptions, is the sculptural treatment of form, which was a direct result of an exclusive study of ancient statues. Painting in their hands becomes more plastic than pictorial, the forms are sharply defined, the drapery falls in the small folds of ancient bas-relief, while the severity of the whole is relieved by rich decorations in the shape of festoons of fruit and foliage, which, when unskillfully managed, give a heavy and over-

loaded effect. This plastic tendency sprang from the discovery, then first dawning upon the men of the Renaissance, that the principles of the highest art are to be found in the antique, and was so far as it went true and laudable in its aim. But in the case of the Squarcionesques this study of classic statuary was not combined with sufficient knowledge of nature, and, therefore, frequently degenerated into a lifeless rigidity and absence of expression, if not into positive ugliness and coarseness of form.

This stiffness and want of vitality strike us at once in the four Evangelists on the ceiling of the chapel, wrongly ascribed by Vasari to Mantegna, and in the upper frescoes of St. Christopher's life, attributed to three different artists—Marco Zoppo, Bono of Ferrara, and Ansuino of Forli. These last-named subjects are not without a considerable degree of skill in perspective and composition, but are alike marked by the same rigidity of form and metallic coldness of colouring. The feeblest of the three is Bono's representation of St. Christopher bearing the child through the river, a work which, in awkwardness, incorrect drawing and truly painful ugliness, seems to exaggerate the worst faults of the Paduan school.

On the other hand there is a decided advance in the frescoes of Niccolo Pizzolo, the only one of the Squarcionesques who approached Mantegna's style, and whose improved colouring and greater nobleness of type are best explained by the discovery that he had worked with the Florentines, Donatello and Filippo Lippi, during their residence in Padua. To him Vasari ascribes the figure of the Eternal between St. Peter and St. Paul on the dome of the tribune, and later critics have recognised his hand in the "Call of St. James and St. John" and "St. James exorcising Devils" on the upper part of the left wall. But the finest of all his works here is "The Assumption," in the apse, a fresco

which in joyous life and freedom of movement so far surpasses the ordinary manner of the Paduans that one of the best critics, Dr. Woltmann, pronounces it to be by Mantegna's hand. Against this we have the testimony of the anonymous traveller of the sixteenth century, who says decidedly that Andrea painted the lower part of the right and the whole of the left wall, but that "The Assumption" and cupola are by Pizzolo. Vasari is silent on this point, but remarks that Pizzolo's works in this chapel yielded nothing in excellence to those of Andrea, and probably the best solution of the question is to accept both "The Assumption" and the upper frescoes of St. James's life as the joint composition of the two artists, or at least to allow that they were partly designed by Mantegna.

In the midst of Pizzolo's labours in the Eremitani Chapel his promising career was cut short by a violent end. He had, it appears, an unlucky habit of taking part in street brawls and riots, and one evening as he was returning home from his work he was attacked and slain by some unknown persons whose enmity he had excited.

Mantegna was now left alone to complete the unfinished work, and whatever uncertainty rests on his share in the earlier frescoes there is no doubt that the six remaining subjects are entirely by his hand. In each of these we see some clearer revelation of unfolding powers. Step by step some fresh difficulty is overcome, some new knowledge gained, until by slow degrees the battle is won, and the mastery over human form is complete.

In the fresco of "St. James baptizing Converts" the statuesque air of Squarcione's school is still strongly felt in the principal figures. The action is stiff, and the faces are mostly wanting in expression. But the spectators of the ceremony are, on the contrary, full of life and animation. Nothing can be more natural than the two children who look on with wondering eyes—the taller of the two

holding a water-melon in his hand, while the smaller one presses close to his side—or the youth under the colonnade in the act of turning round to speak to a figure whose face is concealed by a pillar. If from these we turn to the decorative part of the fresco, the winged angels in the upper corners at once remind us of the charming groups of children on Donatello's bronzes in Sant' Antonio, and prove how attentively Mantegna must have studied these recently finished works of the Florentine master. The beneficial influence of the great sculptor had already appeared in the earlier frescoes of the Eremitani, and from his example Andrea now learnt how to combine the study of nature with sculptural treatment, and to adopt a more elevated type of human form.

The next subject, "St. James before Herod," reveals a new feature, afterwards to become prominent in his career, in the accurate knowledge of Roman costumes and classical architecture which is here displayed. One of the finest figures is that of a soldier leaning on his lance in the left-hand corner of the picture, an ancient Roman, in whom we recognise immediately the painter's own portrait, from the close resemblance which his strongly marked features and massive brow bear to the bust on Andrea's tomb at Mantua. Both of these frescoes show considerable skill in perspective, but in the next, "St. James blessing a kneeling Disciple on his way to Execution," Mantegna boldly ventures on an experiment that is altogether new. For no apparent reason, but purely as a trial of skill, he suddenly alters the point of sight to a low level, and while the feet of the foremost figures appear to stand on the edge of the picture the lower extremities of those in the background vanish altogether. The difficulties thus created are on the whole correctly solved. Each figure is carefully foreshortened, and the Roman arch under which the procession passes is drawn in admirable perspective, but freedom

of action is impaired, and the whole suffers from an unpleasant sense of effort and unnatural constraint. Perspective was in those days a favourite branch of learning in the University of Padua, and Mantegna, whose vigorous genius took pleasure in the driest studies, seems to have derived this strange passion for applying its laws to the human form from Paolo Uccelli, a Florentine who had lately visited Padua. In his ardour to accomplish his self-imposed task he failed to see the mistake of subjecting living figures to the rules of architecture, and of treating them as existing solely in order to demonstrate a scientific problem.

But at the time the young painter's exhibition of skill excited the utmost admiration, and both Daniele Barbaro and Lomazzo praise him as the first artist who opened men's eyes to the true principles of perspective.

If we are to believe Vasari, Squarcione, who till now had been as proud of his pupil's growing fame as if it were his own, suddenly altered his tone and openly blamed Mantegna for the stony rigidity of his figures, declaring that they were mere copies of marble statues, altogether devoid of life and expression.

The reproach, although not wholly undeserved, was a curious one in Squarcione's lips, but the real cause of the breach which took place between the master and scholar was Andrea's connection with the rival workshop of Jacopo Bellini. The Venetian painter, with his two sons, Gentile and Giovanni, had lately taken up his abode at Padua, and a strong friendship had sprung up between Mantegna and the members of his family which before long led to the marriage of the young Paduan with Jacopo's daughter Niccolosia. Their union took place while Mantegna was actually engaged on the Eremitani frescoes—probably about 1454 or 1455, since in 1458 he had already two or three children—and becomes an important fact in art history as

strengthening the ties between these distinguished artists. The influence each was to exercise on the other was destined to prove great and lasting. Jacopo Bellini, who had spent some time in Florence, was probably instrumental in leading Mantegna to follow Donatello and Uccelli's models, while from Giovanni, Andrea would learn the softer colouring and delicate feeling that impart so pure a charm to those well-known Madonnas which fill the churches of Venice. Mantegna, on his part, gave back at least as much as he took, and no one can doubt that Gian Bellini owed to his brother-in-law in a great measure his knowledge of classical architecture and perspective, as well as the sculptural cast of drapery, that distinguish his pictures from those of earlier Venetian masters. In all probability this new influence, rather than Squarcione's jealous reproaches, was the cause of the marked improvement visible in the later frescoes. The principal figures in the "Execution of St. James" are more life-like; there is less hardness in the modelling and laying on of shadows, while the background, with its winding road and rocky terraces crowned with olive-trees, is an exact copy of a Lombard hill-side. Nothing, indeed, is more striking in these frescoes than the close attention to natural objects, which shows how strongly realistic was the bent of our painter's genius, in spite of his Squarcionesque training and love of antique statuary. He not only fills his backgrounds with faithful reproductions of Italian landscape and streets, with red roofs, arched loggias, or vine-trellised arbours, but recalls every detail and renders the furrows and wrinkles of old age, the ragged coat or torn shoe, with an accuracy that is almost painful.

The eagerness with which he sought difficulties and his courage in grappling with them meet us again in the foreshortened rider who looks on at the Saint's martyrdom, and is still more triumphant in the bold action of the men

who drag away the dead body of the giant Christopher, in itself a masterpiece of perspective which served as a model for Titian and other Venetians in dealing with similar subjects in future years.

Unfortunately these two last frescoes, "The Martyrdom" and "Burial of St. Christopher," are much injured, and some of the chief figures are completely obliterated. The portions that remain justify the praises of former critics who pronounced these to be the finest of the whole series. Here at least Squarcione's reproach is refuted, the stony look of the faces has given place to warm flesh-tones and softer modelling, and the band of archers assembled under the vine-trellis in the scene where the saint is to meet his doom are remarkable for their energetic action and expressive faces.

According to Vasari, in this last subject, Mantegna represented Squarcione himself in the character of a fat archer, as a proof that he knew how to draw from living models, and the same writer mentions several other contemporary personages whose portraits are also introduced. Especially interesting in our eyes is the group, in the right-hand corner of "The Martyrdom," of an elderly man standing between two younger figures, one of whom wears a red cap. The Venetian costume of these three spectators, and a certain resemblance of one of the youthful heads to a medal bearing the likeness of Gentile Bellini, go far to confirm the truth of Crowe and Cavalcaselle's supposition that here we have portraits of Mantegna's father and brothers-in-law, who were all in Padua at the time, and whom he would very naturally introduce among his other friends.

With these frescoes Andrea's labours in the church of the Eremitani end, and the decoration of the chapel, with which Squarcione's pupils had been intrusted some ten years before, was finally completed.

If from details of execution we pass to consider the work as a whole, it must be owned that the general impression left upon the spectator's mind is one of coldness and severity. These stern and vigorous figures which look down upon us from the walls awe us by the power and reality of their presence; they impress us by the accurate science and years of assiduous labour which they reveal, but they fail to touch the heart or delight the eye; they are wanting in that sense of beauty which is so conspicuous a feature in Mantegna's later work. If he had painted nothing else he would have left behind him the reputation of a master of strong realistic tendency, who solved difficult problems and attained a remarkable degree of proficiency in drawing and anatomy, but lacked the qualities necessary for the highest class of art.

Fortunately for us Mantegna's activity does not end here. The frescoes of the Eremitani were only the first stage in a great career, and as we contemplate them we can always reflect with satisfaction that these powerful works, in their grimness and austere dignity, in their curious display of scientific knowledge and minute attention to detail, were the preliminary studies, by means of which he reached the perfection of after years, and achieved the ultimate successes that were to make his name celebrated.



CHAPTER II.

WORK AT VERONA AND MANTUA, A.D. 1457—1470.

THE exact date of the completion of the Eremitani frescoes is uncertain, but they were probably finished by 1458, perhaps earlier. Mantegna was still a young man, not more than six or seven-and-twenty, but in actual power as well as in reputation second to no living painter in North Italy.

We have already noticed the chief influences brought to bear on his early training. One by one we have watched him discover and assimilate, with the same clearness of intellect and indefatigable energy, the peculiar virtue of each successive artist with whom he was brought into contact. We have seen him add Florentine principles to Squarcione's teaching, learn from Donatello how to combine the study of nature with the laws of sculpture, gain from Uccelli that knowledge of perspective which had for him so subtle a fascination, and last of all temper this fiery genius under the gentler spell of Gian Bellini's more genial art.

Another and a very important element in his development was the constant intercourse which he maintained with the most learned Paduan scholars, and the keen pleasure with which he joined in their antiquarian researches in the neighbourhood. He accompanied Felice

Feliciano, a famous collector of inscriptions, on several excursions in the environs of Verona and the Lago di Garda for the express purpose of examining classical remains, and in 1463 this same Feliciano dedicated his work on ancient epigrams to the painter, whose learning he extols in the highest terms. One result of these explorations in the classic ground of Sermione appears in the fragments of Latin inscriptions which are repeatedly introduced in the Eremitani frescoes, and on one Roman portico the name of Vitruvius Cerdo, a Verona architect of ancient days, is still distinctly legible.

This practice was a common one with many of the artists of Squarcione and Mantegna's school, who, in their genuine enthusiasm for classical art, copied antique monuments and inscriptions with the minutest accuracy, and afterwards used them as accessory portions of their own compositions. We have a notable example of this habit in the drawing of a pagan altar bearing an inscription to the effect that it was found in a vault of the Baths of Caracalla, then known as the Antonine palace at Rome. The drawing, evidently by the hand of some Paduan artist, is now preserved at Christ Church, Oxford.

Besides Feliciano, Andrea numbered among his intimate friends several eminent scholars then studying at the University of Padua, such as Matteo Bossi, afterwards Abbot of Fiesole, and the Hungarian bishop Giovanni Pannonio, who celebrated the artist's genius in Latin verse as early as 1458, and whose portrait Mantegna painted in the same year.

This rare degree of culture which made him the friend of scholars, this genuine delight in classical studies and antique art, was destined to supply our master with some of his highest inspirations, and ultimately render him the foremost representative among painters of that enthusiasm for antiquity which was the ruling passion of Italy in the fifteenth century.

During the years that Andrea was employed on the Eremitani frescoes we hear little else of his private life excepting that he married Niccolosia Bellini, and became estranged from his old master Squarcione, while two panel pictures, the Brera Altar-piece which he painted in 1454 for Santa Giustina, and the "St. Euphemia" now at Naples, are the only other works that are left us of this period. In the former, a vigorous but not very pleasing work, St. Luke is represented writing at a table between four single figures of saints, while above we have a Pietà with the Virgin, St. John, and four other saints. Far more graceful in conception is the St. Euphemia standing in her garlanded niche with the lily in her hand and the lion beside her. This admirably drawn figure in attitude and form closely resembles an antique statue, and will bear comparison with the best of the later frescoes.

So far, Andrea's works had been confined to Padua, but his fame had spread far beyond his native city, and before he had finished his labours in the Eremitani, pressing invitations to move to Mantua had reached him from Lodovico Gonzaga, Marquis of that principality. This prince, a generous patron of letters as well as a brave soldier and wise ruler, was anxious to make his court a centre of art and learning; and, having failed in his efforts to attract the aged Donatello, spared no pains to secure the services of the Paduan artist, whose rising genius was already eclipsing that of all others. As early as 1456 we find Lodovico entering into communication with Andrea, first by letter and then through the sculptor Luca Fancelli, a confidential agent of the Marquis. His offers were liberal; fifteen ducats a month, lodging, firewood, and sufficient wheat to feed the members of his family, who are reckoned as six in number; besides, he proposed to assist him on his journey to Mantua by sending a boat to meet him.

Mantegna lent a willing ear to these proposals, but his

hands were full, and flattering as were Lodovico's entreaties and assurances of good-will, he was slow to comply with the request. In his letters he assigns first one reason, then another, for delaying his departure. First, he asks for time to execute an order given him by Gregorio Corraro, Abbot of San Zeno of Verona, and protonotary to the Apostolic See. Then he begs for six months more to complete the work, then for another respite in order to do a little piece for the Podestà of Padua. The Marquis bore all these delays with unalterable patience and courtesy, while he never for a moment relaxed his efforts to bring the artist to Mantua, and redoubled his assurance of favour. If Andrea will only come, he says again and again, and himself prove the truth of the promises made to him, he will every day of his life find greater cause to rejoice that he has entered the service of the Gonzagas. When the summer of 1459 came and the protonotary's altar-piece was still unfinished, Lodovico suggested as a last resource that the panels should be brought to Mantua and completed there. To this proposal the abbot was too wise a man to consent, and he would not even allow Mantegna to visit Mantua for a day until the picture had been safely delivered into his hands.

This altar-piece, of which we hear so much in Lodovico's correspondence with our master, was the "Madonna and Saints" in San Zeno, of Verona, taken to Paris in 1797, but now restored (without its predella) to its place, and one of the finest religious compositions that Andrea ever painted. All the chief characteristics of Andrea's Paduan time are here brought together in a more elevated form, and for the first time we realise fully how great was the progress he had made since the days when he began to paint in the Eremitani Chapel. Nothing can exceed the simple dignity and grace of the youthful virgin, who sits erect under a portico decorated with a frieze of children bearing

festoons of fruit, through which we see a thick growth of trees, and open space of blue sky beyond. On the pillars of the portico are medallions in which Andrea has after his usual habit introduced reliefs of classical subjects, one of which is a horse-tamer, evidently copied from the famous "Twins," of Monte Cavallo, and curious as adopted by a painter who had not yet visited Rome. The saints who stand in the groups on either side of the Madonna's throne are still too much treated as isolated figures, but each statue-like form has a grandeur of its own, and the graceful heads of the young St. John and St. Lawrence contrast finely with those of the aged apostles and fathers of the Church, while in the boy-angels who play on the steps of the throne, or sing with wide-parted lips, we have the first of those child-faces whose laughing eyes look down from many of Mantegna's pictures and seem to give us a foretaste of Raphael's sweetness. Unfortunately, the different parts of the predella that belonged to this beautiful altarpiece are scattered in different galleries, the "Gethsemane" and "Ascension" are at Tours, the "Crucifixion," in the dramatic action of its varied group by far the finest of the three, is in the Louvre.

According to Vasari, Mantegna painted several other pictures in Verona, but the only other traces of his work now remaining in that city are some equestrian figures and chiaroscuro decorations on the façade of a house near San Fermo Maggiore, and we have no proof of his ever having resided there.

The "little piece" which Andrea executed for Giacomo Marcello, Podestà of Padua, has been identified in the "Christ on the Mount of Olives" of the Baring collection, a work in which we feel the same union of plastic tendency of form and strong realism that strikes us in the frescoes. In the background, a wild and savage landscape, the desolate aspect of which is heightened by the presence of

cranes and birds of prey, we recognise the city of Padua with the Eremitani Church.

If we compare this picture with the well-known rendering of the same subject by Giovanni Bellini in the National Gallery, we shall see how much of the original conception and drawing the Venetian artist borrowed from his brother-in-law, and at the same time how well he knew how to modify Andrea's severer style by his own more delicate grace and feeling for colour.

These altar-pieces were Mantegna's last works in his native city. The patience of the Marquis was at length rewarded, and towards the close of the year 1459, Andrea moved to Mantua with his family. Soon afterwards Jacopo Bellini died, his sons moved to Venice, and the Paduan school of painting, left in the hands of inferior followers of Squarcione, came to a practical end.

But Paduan art lived on in the work of her greatest son, and the new influences and surroundings of Mantegna's adopted city gave fresh impulse to his creative energy.

That he settled at Mantua before the end of 1459 is proved by a letter of his written to the Marquis in May, 1478, in which he speaks of having been almost nineteen years in Lodovico's service, but it is not till the spring of 1463 that we hear of him as engaged in painting at Goito, one of the summer villas belonging to the Gonzagas. Both this palace and the neighbouring Castle of Cavriana, where he also painted, have been destroyed, and a few panel pictures now dispersed throughout Europe are the only productions that remain of his first ten years' residence at the Court of Mantua.

Chief among these is the Uffizi triptych, which originally belonged to a chapel of the Gonzagas, and may be the very picture to which Andrea alludes in a letter of 1464 as destined for the little chapel, and which Vasari tells us contained many small but most beautiful figures.

The "Adoration of the Magi" forms the subject of the central panel, while the "Ascension" and the "Presentation in the Temple" are represented on the wings. All three are marked by the miniature-like finish which reveals the thoroughly practised hand and loving zeal of one who took delight in carrying his work to the highest possible perfection.

In the seated Virgin, of the strong type of womanhood which Andrea seems to prefer, with the flight of cherubs encircling her head, and the patches of rough herbage starting out of the rocks behind her, we recognise the original of his own unfinished engraving, the "Virgin of the Grotto." The red cherub-heads, which remind us of the similar wreath with which Giovanni Bellini surrounds one of his Madonnas in the Academy of Venice, are again introduced in "The Ascension." Here the group of apostles, who gaze upwards, have more of the slender form used by Pizzolo in the Eremitani frescoes, and the panel is inferior as a whole to "The Presentation."

This is in Mantegna's best manner, the principal figures full of grace and dignity, the heads excellent in expression, especially that of the child sucking his finger as he leans against his mother, while Andrea's historic feeling appears in the typical reliefs of "Moses breaking the Tables" and "Abraham sacrificing Isaac," which adorn the altar. Another fine rendering of this subject by Mantegna is now in the Berlin Gallery, which also possesses two other works belonging to this period, a half-length "Madonna holding the Child on a Parapet," and a portrait of an old ecclesiastic.

Probably this Madonna was the very one of which Vasari speaks as painted by Mantegna, for his old friend, the famous orator, Matteo Bossi, Abbot of Fiesole, since the frame decorated with angels and instruments of the Passion exactly corresponds with his description, and the

strikingly-truthful portrait may well be that of the Abbot himself, whose friendship for the painter neither time nor distance seems to have impaired.

A "Death of the Virgin," with a view of Mantua and its lake seen through a colonnade, now at Madrid, and chiaroscuro figures known as "Summer" and "Autumn," now at Hamilton Palace, may be mentioned as painted about 1470, when Andrea was engaged in works at the Castle of Mantua.

More interesting in the eyes of most of us are the two small pictures of the Saints Sebastian and George, two youthful figures intended to show the contrast of suffering and repose. In the "St. Sebastian" now at Vienna, Mantegna has deliberately set himself the task of representing the human form wrung by physical agony, and the divine strength of a will that can conquer pain by the power of its endurance. His success was complete, and among the countless representations of martyrdom that exist, there is scarcely a finer example than this St. Sebastian bound to the ruined column and pierced with arrows, lifting his eyes heavenwards in his mortal agony. At his feet lie broken statues and marbles, shattered fragments of the old world that was crumbling to ruins around, and which by the delicate grace of their shapes and mouldings help to associate ideas of beauty with this scene of suffering and death.

The opposite of this picture meets us in the armed "St. George" of the Venice Academy, who stands under an archway garlanded with flowers, leaning on his lance in satisfied repose of victory, with the dragon dead at his feet. His classical head is not unlike the youthful saints of the Verona altar-piece, while the highly finished character of the execution approaches the style of the Uffizi triptych, evidently painted about the same time.

To these we may add the wonderful "Dead Christ" of the Brera, a work almost terrible in its realism, and exag-

gerated foreshortening, but which reveals in a surprising degree Mantegna's mastery both in drawing and management of light and shade. This *Cristo in Scurto* was one of those daring trials of skill which he loved to attempt, not to please the eye or gratify the taste of his employers, but simply in order to overcome some difficulty or solve some problem from which a less powerful mind would have shrunk.

The satisfaction which he felt in the success of this experiment is proved by his unwillingness to part with this work, which never left his studio until his death, when it is mentioned by his son in the list of paintings that were sold to pay his debts.

In the same style as this "Pietà," but with more attempt at decorative effect, is the picture exhibited by Sir William Abdy, in the last winter exhibition at Burlington House (1880—81). Here the dead Christ lies on a carved throne of coloured marbles, the back of which is formed by the broken tables of the law. On either side are two grandly defined forms of Isaiah and Jerome, as representatives of the old and new dispensations, between whom Christ stands. The background is more elaborate than usual. On one side is a wild tract of mountainous country, on the other a river and fertile valley, along the slopes of which we see rows of smiling villages, church-towers, and fields enclosed with hedges. In the foreground skulls and bones are scattered at the feet of the prophets, and beasts and birds of gay plumage enliven the scene. A stag and panther and a red parrot are prominent figures, but all these minor details are subdued to the leading idea in the painter's mind. Doubts have been entertained as to the authorship of the picture, but both its general style and colouring and the presence of that weird grandeur of imagination peculiar to Mantegna are strong proofs of its genuineness.



CHAPTER III.

THE CAMERA DEGLI SPOSI, A.D. 1470—1474.

RECENT research has brought to light a series of valuable letters between the Gonzagas and Mantegna, which tell us little indeed about his existing works, but much that is of the deepest interest concerning his private life, and especially his relations with Lodovico and his family.

The Marquis had kept his word and proved himself a true friend and generous patron to the Paduan artist. *Carissimé noster*, *dilecte noster*, are the terms in which he always addresses him, and the thoughtful consideration and patience with which he treated Andrea in what must frequently have been very trying circumstances, are beyond all praise.

The first letter of the series is a complaint which the painter, writing from Goïto, addresses to Lodovico, saying that his stipend is irregularly paid, a wrong which the Marquis promptly redressed. Three years later we find him in the same liberal spirit advancing one hundred ducats which Mantegna begged in order to decorate and improve his house in Mantua.

There our painter spent the winter with his wife and three children—*tutto la mia brigatela* he calls them in a letter to the Marquis—and each year, when the summer

heats returned, he moved to a country-house at Buscoldo, where he afterwards received a grant of land from his patron.

In 1466 he paid a visit to Florence, where he had at least one friend in the learned Abbot of Fiesole, and a letter from Giovanni Aldobrandini, an agent of Lodovico, describes the great respect with which he was received, and the admiration excited by his varied accomplishments. "Not only in painting but in other ways he showed remarkable knowledge and most excellent understanding" is Aldobrandini's testimony, and we learn from other sources that he took much pleasure in poetry, and even wrote verses himself. A sonnet of his composition addressed to a lady whose name is unknown, and written in the fashionable Platonic style of the day, has been discovered in the Mantuan archives and is given by Moschini. As a collector of antiquities he had acquired considerable reputation, and in 1472 we find the young Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga, then at Bologna, begging his father that Mantegna may be sent to him that he may have the pleasure of showing him his cameos, bronzes, and other antiques.

Unfortunately the culture and refined taste which made Mantegna so agreeable a companion were accompanied by an irritable temper, and a readiness to take offence, which rendered him the reverse of a pleasant neighbour. The most trifling contradictions were sufficient to excite furious outbursts of anger on his part, and his letters to Lodovico are full of the pettiest grievances. The Marquis, it must be said, treated him with the utmost forbearance, and spared no pains to inquire into the grounds of his complaints, however small. On one occasion he implores Lodovico to punish a tailor who has spoilt a piece of his cloth, on another he has quarrelled with a gardener and his wife who live in the same street, and complains that neither he nor his wife can leave the house without being attacked by insulting words. More serious was the law-

suit in which he found himself involved with the engraver, Zoan Andrea, whom he suspected of purloining his plates, and to whom he administered a sound thrashing. Upon this Zoan Andrea had recourse to legal measures, in which Mantegna seems to have fared badly, since he was again compelled to seek the help of his powerful patron.

But of all Andrea's quarrels, that which excited his greatest wrath was his breach with his Buscoldo neighbour, Francesco Aliprandi, whom he publicly accused of stealing five hundred quinces from a tree which grew in his garden. There is a singular combination of the pathetic and ludicrous in Mantegna's description of the beauty of his fruit tree, with its branches so heavily laden that they touched the ground. Each day he looked upon it with fresh delight, until one September morning he found all the quinces gone, and the tree stripped and bare. His anger knew no bounds, and he did not hesitate to charge his nearest neighbours, the Aliprandi, who he was convinced bore him secret ill-will with the theft. Upon this Francesco Aliprandi, who seems to have been a citizen of good birth, denied the charge indignantly, saying that during the two hundred years his family had lived in Mantua, they had never been insulted by so vile an epithet as that of thief, and complaining of Mantegna's disagreeable character as the real cause of all this disturbance. "No one," Aliprandi continues, "can live near him in peace, and at the present moment he is engaged in lawsuits with no less than five of his neighbours." Even the Marquis was forced to admit this time that Andrea was in the wrong, and, after carefully investigating the case, arrived at the conclusion that the quinces had been stolen by some unknown thief.

This ruggedness of disposition and exaggerated susceptibility which, by attaching excessive importance to the trifling cares of daily life, proved a constant torment

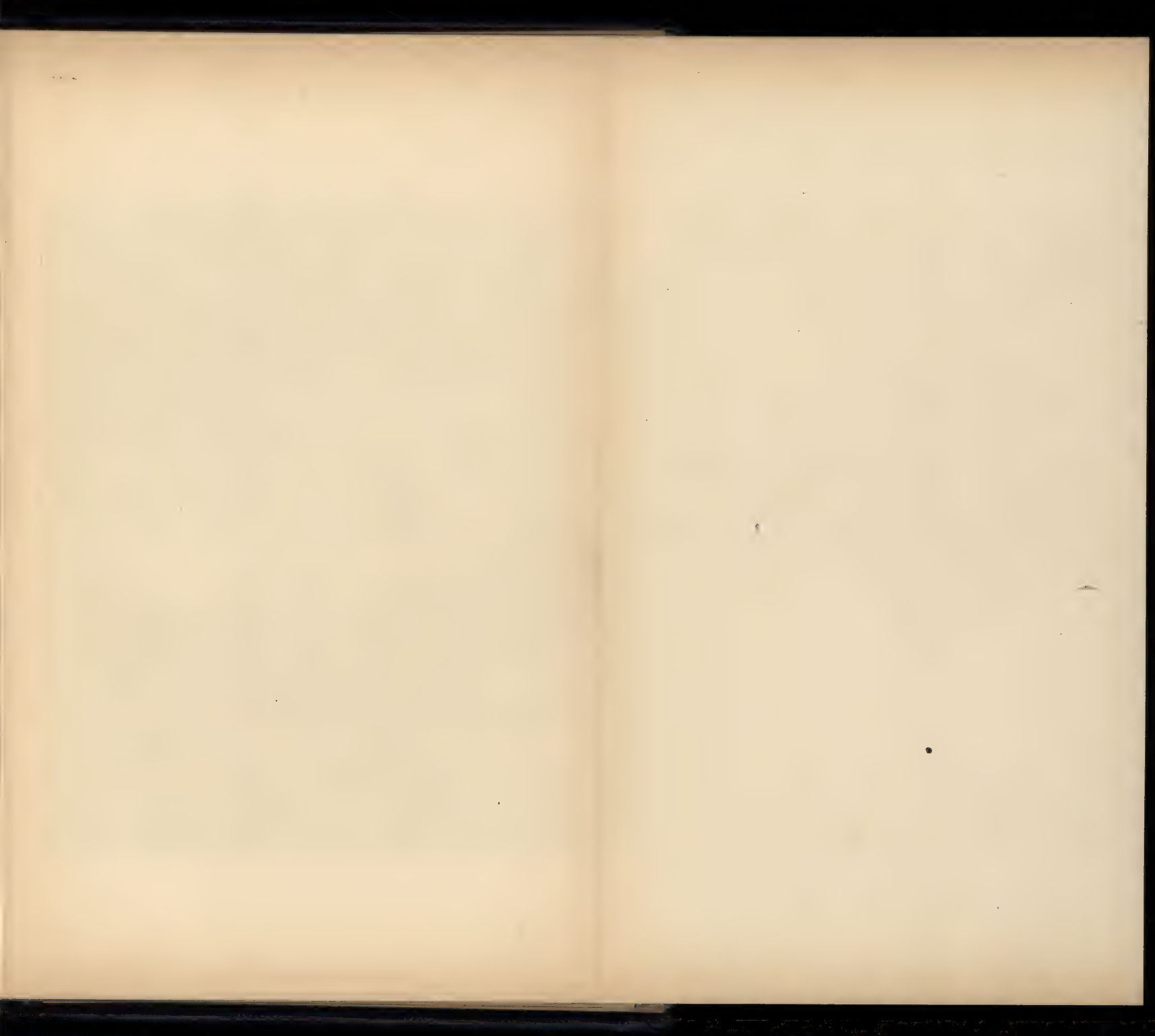
to Mantegna and those around him, remind us curiously of Michelangelo, whom in more ways than one our master resembled.

Like the great Florentine in this also, he never stooped to flattery or servile expressions in addressing his patron. On the contrary, there is from the first an independent spirit and proud consciousness of his own merit which never deserts him, and he tells the Marquis repeatedly that his coming to Mantua was a great favour on his part, and that no other prince in Italy has so industrious an artist in his service.

The boast may not have sounded well in Mantegna's lips, but it was a true one. His activity was indefatigable, and whether he painted in chapels and palaces, or made studies for tapestry or designs from the turkey-cocks and hens which strutted in the court poultry-yard, his time and powers were unreservedly placed at Lodovico's disposal. What we have to regret is that so little of all his splendid work is left, although when we consider the subsequent history of Mantua, it is rather to be wondered that anything has been saved from the general wreck.

In 1630, little more than a hundred years after Mantegna's time, the city was besieged during three months by the Imperialists, and ultimately taken and sacked for three whole days. In 1797 it was again twice besieged and bombarded by the French and Austrians, and during the wars of the present century the ducal palace has been alternately occupied by French and German soldiers. This once sumptuous pile is now the dreariest and most desolate of palaces. The little life that still lingers in the old town clusters round the market-place on the Piazza delle Erbe, and grass grows on the deserted square which was once the centre of "Mantova la Gloriosa."

We pass through endless suites of spacious halls paved with marble and adorned with decaying frescoes and other





MEETING OF LODOVICO GONZAGA AND HIS SON, THE CARDINAL FRANCESCO. BY MANTEGNA.

remnants of faded splendour, till we reach the older part of the palace known in the days of the Gonzagas as the Castello di Corte. From its windows we look down on the sleepy waters of the vast lagoon, which seems to divide Mantua from the outer world, and over miles of swampy marshes, through which "smooth-sliding Mincius" winds its way.

Here the Gonzagas held their splendid court, here the banqueting-halls where they feasted, the ball-rooms—the scenes of their revels and masquerades—the suite of tiny apartments expressly built for the use of the dwarfs, the courtyards where the dogs were kept, are still shown. Here Mantegna painted, and here the walls of a room, now used to contain the archives, were entirely covered with frescoes by himself.

This was the famous Camera degli Sposi, on which Andrea was engaged between 1470 and 1474, and where he represented Lodovico Gonzaga and his wife, Barbara of Brandenburg, surrounded by the different members of their family.

All the frescoes have been much damaged, and those on two of the walls completely obliterated; but the groups which remain and the decorations of the ceiling are of the highest interest, and, if we except the Hampton Court Triumphs, form the most important series that we have from Mantegna's hand.

On the east wall above the mantel-piece is the central group. Lodovico and his wife, clad in rich brocaded robes, are seated in a garden surrounded by their children, and dwarfs in the act of receiving a messenger, who hands the Marquis a letter. Neither Lodovico nor any of his family seem to have been remarkable for personal beauty, and Mantegna has not made any attempt to embellish them. He paints them exactly as they were, in the stiff costumes of the day. Barbara wears the same veiled horn-shaped

head-dress as in Andrea's portrait-engraving in the British Museum; the children and courtiers are in short jackets and tight-fitting caps. Nothing is omitted that could complete the picture, which is like a page torn out of the court life of those times; a favourite greyhound lies asleep under Lodovico's chair, and several dwarfs positively repulsive in their ugliness are introduced. They formed, we know, an important part of the household, since the Marquis kept a particular race, bred at Mantua, and reserved a whole wing of his palace, with staircases, halls, and bedrooms adapted to their stature, for their exclusive use.

Beyond the fine figure of the courtier on the right, evidently the painter's own portrait, we have another compartment where the Marquis stands at the head of the stairs welcoming his guests, or, as Selvatico suggests, opening his arms to his son Federico, who had been in disgrace for refusing to consent to a marriage which Lodovico had arranged for him. This subject is much damaged, but on the entrance-wall is another group, the best preserved of the three, in which the Marquis meets his younger son, the boy-cardinal Francesco, on his return from Rome. The composition is stiff and the dresses awkward, but nothing can surpass the life-like character of the heads, whether we fix our eyes on the baby-faces and demure air of the children who advance to welcome their brother, or on the vigorous profiles of Lodovico and his courtiers. A tame lion crouches at the feet of the Marquis, and a view of hills and classical temples, intended to represent Rome, fills in the background. On the opposite side of the doorway the servants and pages in attendance are introduced holding their master's horse, and several dogs in leash, all admirably drawn; while above the door itself a charming group of seven winged boys, in every possible attitude, support a tablet with the following inscription:—

Ill Lodovico II. M.M.
 Principi optimo ac
 Fide invictissimo
 Et Ill Barbaræ eius
 Conjugi Mulierum Glor
 Incomparabili
 Suus Andreas Mantinia
 Patavus opus hoc tenue
 Ad eorum Decus absolvit.
 Ann. MCCCCLXXIII.

The grace and freshness of these boy-angels form a striking contrast to the stiff figures on the walls, and both here and in the decorations of the ceiling our painter, released from the obligations of portraiture, allowed his fancy free play. Medallions of the Cæsars wreathed in laurel, grisaille scenes from the myths of Hercules and Antæus, Orpheus, Apollo, and the Tritons, occupy the vaulting of the ceiling; while in the centre a circular opening is painted to represent a blue sky, across which white clouds are floating by, as we see in actual reality in the Pantheon of Rome. Round this open space runs a balustrade, upon which a peacock is perched and a basket of fruit rests. Two women, a girl with a jewelled head-dress and a negress, look down from above with laughing faces, while a band of winged boys play on the edge of the stone-work.

These are the famous figures, *che scortano di sotto in sù*, which Vasari says excited general admiration when Mantegna first painted them in the Castle of Mantua.

Instead of treating the ceiling in the usual fashion, as another flat surface on a level with the spectator's eye, he endeavoured to represent the figures he painted there as seen from below, and in reality looking down over the balustrade. The optical illusion is effected in a masterly way, and the playful boys, who push their heads through

the open stone-work of the parapet or balance themselves on its edge, are admirably foreshortened.

Curiously enough, this new principle of ceiling decoration, which in Corregio's days was to become universal, and which Mantegna here attempted for the first time, was employed at almost the same moment by another painter, Melozzo da Forli, in his fresco of the "Glory of Heaven" in the tribune of the Church of the SS. Apostoli at Rome. Whether the two masters had ever been brought into personal contact we do not learn, but we know that Giovanni Santi, the father of Raphael, in his rhyming chronicle, gives Mantegna's perspective the highest praise, and we may infer from this that the great Lombard's influence had penetrated far enough south to reach the Umbrian artists.

The frescoes of the Camera degli Sposi were finished in 1474, and ten years later it is recorded that Mantegna painted in another part of the palace, known as the Scalcheria; but a ruined ceiling, with the same circular opening and sportive Loves, is all that is left of his work there.

Traces of his hand are also visible in another hall in some of the groups of a large, much-injured fresco, where the first Gonzaga is represented taking the oath as *Capitano del popolo*, and more especially in the children holding a tablet which once bore a now-effaced inscription.

All else has perished. The lapse of time and the more cruel ravages of man have swept away whatever other paintings once adorned these walls, and the precious fragments of the Camera degli Sposi are absolutely the only works of Mantegna that are still to be seen in this his adopted city, where he spent well-nigh fifty years of his life.



CHAPTER IV.

WORK AT MANTUA AND ROME: ENGRAVINGS, A.D. 1474—1490.

THE painting of the Camera degli Sposi gave the Marquis an opportunity for the bestowal of new favours on his chosen artist, "suus Andreas," as Mantegna proudly terms himself on the tablet where he has recorded the completion of the work. Lodovico now granted him a piece of land near the Church of St. Sebastian, in Mantua, where Andrea built a house with the help of the architect Giovanni di Padova, and decorated it with frescoes which were the admiration of his contemporaries, but which perished in the sack of Mantua.

Unfortunately his love of splendid undertakings led him into extravagance; he had already incurred heavy debts by purchasing a property at Buscoldo, and the expenses of his new house involved him in further difficulties. According to his usual habit he had recourse to the Marquis, and addressed him on the 13th of May, 1478, in a querulous letter, complaining that he is growing old, and has several sons and one daughter of a marriageable age, and yet that while others think he is basking in the sunshine of his Excellency's favour he is in reality poorer than when he first came to Mantua. He ended by asking him to pay the eight hundred ducats required to satisfy his Buscoldo creditors, and to give him six hundred more in order to defray the cost of his new house.

Lodovico was at that time in great difficulties himself,

for he had been defeated by his enemies, and even compelled to pawn his jewels. None the less his reply was frank and generous. He fully recognised his obligations, and assured him that all his last pledges should be redeemed, but reminded him that of late fortune had been unfavourable to his arms, and that it was impossible for him to give what he did not possess. This letter, written in the same kindly spirit which we have often before had occasion to notice, was the last which Andrea ever received from his noble patron. Before another month had elapsed the good Marquis was dead, and had been succeeded by his son Federico.

The young Gonzaga had known Mantegna from his boyhood, and proved as kind and liberal a friend as his father to the wayward artist. He not only paid his debts, but exempted the estates which he possessed both at Goito and at Mantua from the land-tax. All his dealings with Andrea are marked by the same generous feeling. His letters express much concern on hearing of an attack of illness which had interrupted the painter's work; and on another occasion, when one of Andrea's sons was ill, he sent his own doctor from Venice to attend him.

During the six years of this prince's brief reign Mantegna was chiefly employed in painting halls at the villas of Marniolo and Gonzaga, which have long since shared the common ruin of the summer palaces round Mantua.

His fame was now at its height. "The virtue of Andrea," wrote the Marquis Federico, "is known to the whole world;" and in 1483 Lorenzo de' Medici stopped at Mantua to visit our painter's house and renowned collection of antiquities. Other sovereigns sent him pressing invitations, and all were desirous of having a work by Mantegna's hand; but the great man was capricious, and refused most of these solicitations. Federico himself had to make his painter's excuses in an elaborate epistle to the Duchess of Milan,

whose portrait Andrea flatly refused to undertake. There was no help for it, and the disappointed lady had to rest satisfied with Federico's explanation, that since these excellent masters were so full of fancies we must be content with what they choose to give us.

But when Federico's early death in 1484 left the rule of his principality to a mere child, Andrea, filled with anxiety for the future, and still heavily burdened with debt, began to look around him for another patron. His thoughts naturally turned to the illustrious patron of the fine arts who had recently visited his studio, and he appealed to Lorenzo de' Medici in a pathetic letter, bewailing the losses he had sustained in the successive deaths of two generous masters, and begging to be employed, if perchance he should have any talent likely to please so magnificent a prince. What answer Lorenzo returned to this entreaty we do not learn, but he probably gave him a commission before long, since we know that it was for him Andrea painted the beautiful little Virgin of the Uffizi, which, with the master's habitual slowness, he did not finish until the close of his visit to Rome. This little gem remains a precious memorial of the intercourse between two of the most interesting personalities of the Renaissance, and few of Andrea's conceptions are sweeter than the blue-draped Mother gazing with drooping eyelids on the Child whom she rocks to sleep in her arms, while the peasants are seen at work in the field beyond and a band of herdsmen drive their flocks up the steep hill-side path.

After all, however, the state of affairs at Mantua was more hopeful than Andrea had imagined in his first grief for the loss of Federico; and before long the contemplated marriage of the boy Marquis Francesco with Isabella of Este renewed his connection with the house of Ferrara, whose members had been among his earliest patrons. He now painted a Madonna for the Duchess Eleanor, which Fran-

cesco himself took to Ferrara, where his mother-in-law was impatiently awaiting its arrival. Most critics agree in identifying this picture with the noble Virgin, formerly in the possession of Sir C. Eastlake and now in the Dresden Gallery, a work in which the thoughtfulness of the child and tender maternal feeling of Mary are peculiarly impressive.

Very soon afterwards, in the year 1485, Mantegna began the greatest work of his whole life, the "Triumphs of Julius Cæsar," now at Hampton Court. They were originally destined for the palace of St. Sebastian, at Mantua, which the young Marquis was then building; and a letter of the 25th of August, 1485, describes how Prince Ercole of Ferrara saw Mantegna employed on them in his studio. While engaged on this engrossing work he was interrupted in the summer of 1488 by an invitation from Pope Innocent VIII., who begged Francesco that the great Lombard artist might be allowed to decorate his newly erected chapel in the Vatican. Political reasons induced the Marquis to consent; he knighted Andrea and sent him to Rome with the most flattering recommendations.

During two years Mantegna painted in the chapel of the Vatican, and it is a subject of the deepest regret that a series of frescoes executed in his best period should have been ruthlessly destroyed by Pius VI. when he enlarged the Vatican Museum. On the entrance wall the Madonna sat enthroned, above the altar was the "Baptism," on the side walls the "Birth of Christ" and the "Adoration of the Magi;" while Old Testament subjects and the Virtues were represented in grisaille on the ceiling, all painted, says Vasari, with the same miniature-like finish.

But Andrea did not find the Pope a liberal patron or Rome a pleasant residence. He complains bitterly in his letters to Francesco of the irregular payment which he receives, and the difference which he finds between the habits of the Vatican and those of the Courts.

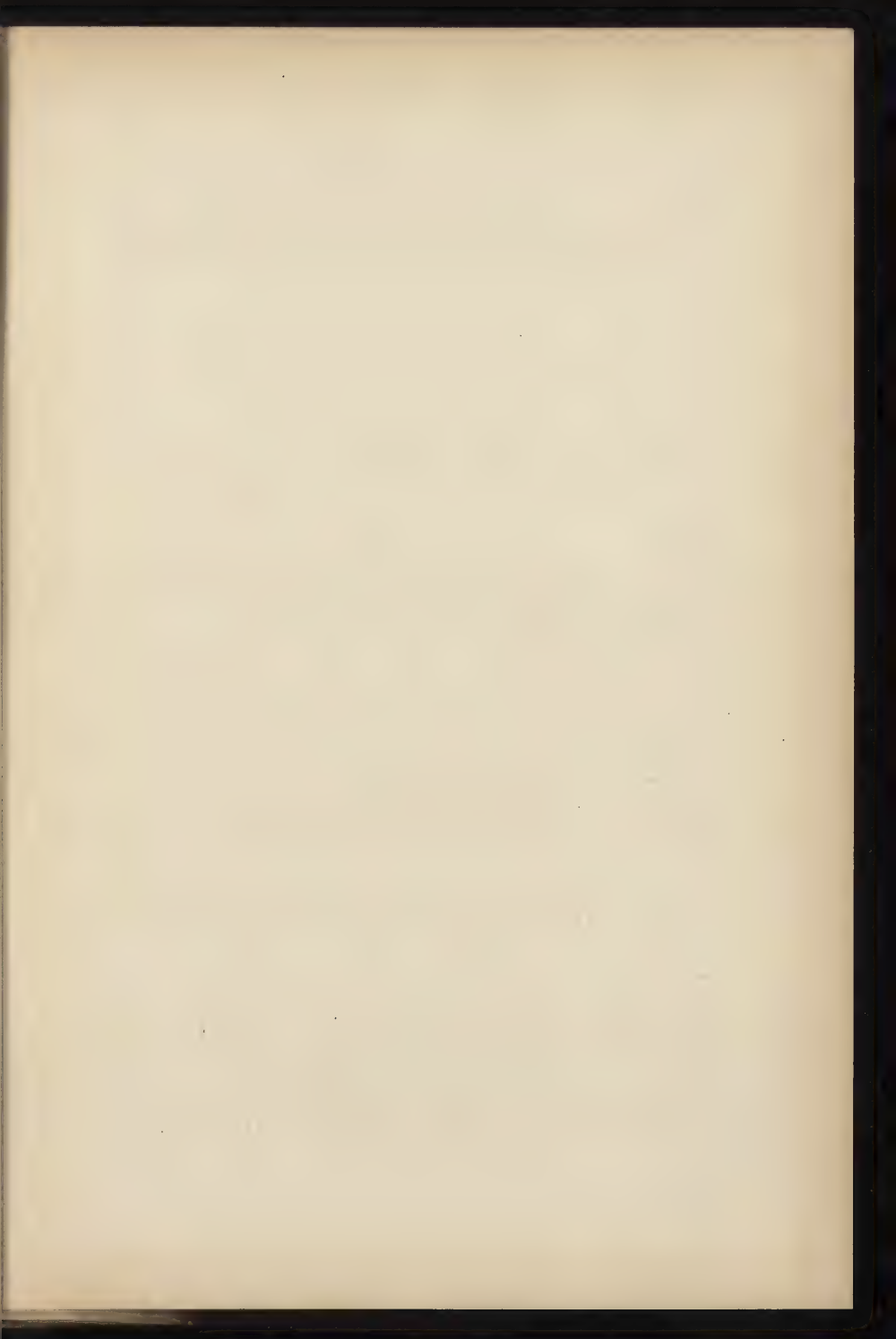
Whether he was not treated with the deference to which he was accustomed, or whether failing health oppressed his spirits, his tone becomes more and more melancholy. A longing for home had seized him, and he implores the Marquis to send him a few lines of comfort, since he is now, as he always has been, the child of the House of Gonzaga, and will serve no other prince. Anxiety for his unfinished "Triumphs" is added to the solicitude which he feels for his absent family, and he entreats Francesco in the same breath to find his son Lodovico employment, and to take care that his "Triumphs" are not injured by rain coming in at the windows, since he considers them the best and most perfect of all his works.

Francesco replied in the most friendly manner, promising to attend to his requests, and begging Andrea to be careful of his health, and to return as speedily as possible to complete the "Triumphs," which he counts the greatest glory of Mantua and his own house. But the frescoes of the Belvedere Chapel were no small task, and Andrea had, as he complains, no assistant to help him in his labours. He found means, however, to express his dissatisfaction to the Pope one day by adding another Virtue to the figures which he had designed. The Pope, who frequently visited him when at work, asked him who the last Virtue might be. "That is Discretion," said the painter; upon which the Pope, not to be outdone, returned promptly, "Put her in good company then, and add Patience." Another version of the story, given by Ridolfi, is that he added the figure of Ingratitude as an eighth to the seven deadly sins, saying that this was the blackest of all crimes. In the following June he writes more cheerfully, describing a singular visitor he has had in the person of Zizim, brother of the Sultan Bajazet, then a captive in the Vatican, and sending his portrait for Francesco's amusement. Another six months passed, and the Marquis wrote again, this time in

a very urgent strain, both to the Pope and Mantegna, saying that his marriage with Isabella of Este was to take place in January, and that Andrea's presence was indispensable. The courier who brought the letter found the painter ill in bed and unable to move; so the wedding festivities had to be celebrated without him, and his return was delayed until the following summer, when the Pope at length dismissed him with a complimentary letter of thanks to the Marquis. Besides the small "Virgin" of the Uffizi, only one other work of Andrea's Roman time is known to exist, a "Man of Sorrows, supported by Angels," now in the Museum of Copenhagen, and, like the Brera Pietà, remarkable for the skill and knowledge displayed both in the drawing and distribution of light and shade.

It has often been said that during his visit to Rome, Mantegna first learnt the new art of engraving, in the practice of which he spent so large a portion of his time and powers. But if we consider, on the one hand, the variety both in style and subject of his plates, and on the other the great undertakings on which he was engaged during his last years, we shall see that this is impossible.

It is true that no fixed date in his earlier career can be assigned with certainty, but an attentive study of his engravings will, we think, result in the conclusion that his first efforts in this new branch of art belong to his Paduan days, and that he pursued it at intervals all through his career, but with increased activity during the latter part of his life. Two plates especially, the unfinished "Scourging" and the "Descent of Christ into Limbo," bear a strong resemblance to the Eremitani frescoes, while others remind us in a similar manner of the San Zeno altar-piece and the earlier Mantuan paintings. At first his method was imperfect, but we trace a gradual improvement in the plates, in proportion as he acquired greater technical knowledge





in the new art and became acquainted with Maso di Finiguerra, and it may be with Schongauer's engravings. All are marked by the same firmness of outline, by the same closely-marked shading drawn in slanting lines from right to left, and, above all, by the constant endeavour to give the print something of the charm of *chiaroscuro* and colour. Since, however, a whole school of engravers formed themselves on Mantegna's style, and Zoan Andrea, Mocetto, Campagnola and others, all adopted his method and confined themselves almost exclusively to the reproduction of his works—the task of distinguishing Mantegna's original plates is by no means easy. Of late years they have been subjected to a severe criticism, and many formerly attributed to him are now rejected. But, whether we accept twenty-four or twenty with M. Duplessis and Bartsch, or limit the number to thirteen with M. Wallis, we shall equally acknowledge how wonderfully every aspect of his genius is represented in these engravings, and how inexhaustible was that wealth of thought and imagery which, unable to find its full expression in painting, sought another channel in the sister art.

Small as is the cycle of genuine prints, they embrace a wide range of subject; pagan myths, Roman and Christian themes, are all treated in turn with the same seriousness of purpose and marvellous variety of invention. Sometimes he reproduces his own pictures—the “*Virgin of the Grotto*” from the Uffizi triptych, in later years we have the “*Triumphs*” and the “*Dancing Muses of the Parnassus*.” The *Bacchanalia*, and still more the “*Battle of the Sea-gods*,” remain to show us how deeply the spirit of classic bas-relief had sunk into his soul. Certain subjects there are in which he takes especial delight, which he treats with as great freshness and originality as if he had never before approached them. Such are the “*Hercules and Antæus*,” already represented in *grisaille* on the ceiling of the

Camera degli Sposi, and the "St. Sebastian," which hardly yields in beauty to the sublime painting of the Belvedere. At other times he reveals some altogether new conception, as in the noble "Descent from the Cross," which supplied the motives whence Albrecht Dürer, Luca Signorelli, Daniele da Volterra, and Rubens in turn took their inspirations. In dramatic power and intensity of feeling this plate is only equalled by the well-known "Entombment," where all the horrors of death, all the depths of the wildest despair, seem gathered up and concentrated in that one figure of St. John wringing his hands aloft and uttering the great and bitter cry which cannot be restrained. The same strong feeling shows itself under another form in the seated Madonna, whose whole figure is swayed with the foreboding of coming anguish that mingles with her love, as she bends forward to press the Child closer to her face. But although these figures, animated with rage and despair, with a great hatred or a still greater love, are the subjects on which Andrea seemed to dwell with preference in his engravings, he returns at times to the serene repose of ancient statuary, and designs for us a group of perfect majesty in the three grand figures of "St. Andrew, St. Longinus, and the Risen Christ," who stands between them, calm and strong, with the awe of that death which he had conquered still upon his brow.

Again, in vivid contrast with reeling satyrs and angry Tritons battling on the rough sea-waves, we have the quiet portraiture of Lodovico Gonzaga and his wife, Barbara,* whose homely faces and earnest eyes look out of the same quaint costumes as on their palace walls at Mantua, and on whose brocaded robes infinite pains have been bestowed.

This is not the place to enter into further details, or a

* We have Professor Colvin's authority for assigning this print to Mantegna, as well as the strong inference drawn from the likeness of the engravings to the frescoes of the Castello di Corte. (Portfolio, vol. 8.)

whole volume might with profit be devoted to the consideration of Mantegna's engravings, but enough has been said to show how important a part of his works they form, and how extraordinary was the genius of the man who could,



JUDITH WITH THE HEAD OF HOLOFERNES.

From the drawing by Mantegna in the Uffizi.

in his leisure moments during the brief intervals which elapsed between his greater tasks, give to the world so rich a treasure of profound and varied thought.



CHAPTER V.

THE TRIUMPHS OF JULIUS CÆSAR: DRAWINGS, 1490—1500.

MANTEGNA, as we have already mentioned, returned to Mantua in the summer of 1490, and during the rest of that year and the whole of the following one he devoted himself without interruption to his "Triumphs," which he finally completed in February, 1492.

This famous series consists of nine pieces of fine twilled linen, upon which Andrea painted in tempera the triumphal procession of Julius Cæsar on his way to the Capitol, after the Conquest of Gaul. The whole formed a frieze eighty feet long, and the separate compartments, each nine feet high, were originally divided by pilasters adorned with warlike ornaments.

In the first piece, the trumpeters marching at the head of the procession open the pageant with a burst of warlike music, closely followed by standard-bearers carrying pictures of Cæsar's victories, smoking censers, and a large bust of Roma Victrix. In the second, the gods of the captive cities are borne in chariots, a colossal Jupiter and Juno foremost, then a fine Cybele, and after these come trophies of armour, battering-rams, and other warlike implements, lifted high on men's shoulders. The costlier part of the spoil follows in the third and fourth compartments, where strong men bend under the weight of vases

filled with gold and treasures, and white heifers garlanded with flowers ready for sacrifice, are led by veiled priests and beautiful fair-haired youths in their white tunics and red girdles. In the fifth picture another band of trumpeters heralds the next division, and four large elephants, hung with gold chains and draperies, bear on their backs baskets of flowers and young children who fan the flames of lighted candelabra. More trophies follow in the sixth compartment; the armour of captive princes is borne aloft on poles, and so great is its weight that one old soldier, exhausted by the load he bears, sits down to recover breath. In the next picture we reach the most interesting part of the procession—a train of captives who advance with slow and sorrowful steps, but not without an air of noble fortitude on their faces as they meet the jeers of the populace. Men and women of all ages are among them, proud chiefs, matrons of royal blood, sweet-faced maidens, a young bride with the myrtle wreath on her fair brow and a coral necklace round her throat. Close to her we see a mother bearing her youngest born in her arms and leading a boy by the hand, who cries to be taken up, while the old grandmother bends down to soothe him with caresses.

In the eighth picture, immediately following this touching group, come the jesters and hideous buffoons, who mock the prisoners with their laughter and ape-like grimaces, and a troop of musicians singing and dancing to the sound of timbrels. After these we have another company of *signiferi*, this time bearing the eagles of the victorious legions and the she-wolf of Rome. Their faces are turned backwards, and their eager, expectant gaze prepare us for the coming of the conqueror, who appears in the last picture seated on a richly sculptured biga with sceptre and palm in his hand, and a laurel crown, which a winged Victory is in the act of placing on his brow. At

his feet children shout for joy, and wave laurel boughs in his path; the multitude press round his chariot wheels, and a gaily-clad youth, with eager enthusiasm in his upturned gaze, lifts aloft a banner bearing Cæsar's well-known motto, *Veni, vidi, vici*, to meet the victor's eyes.

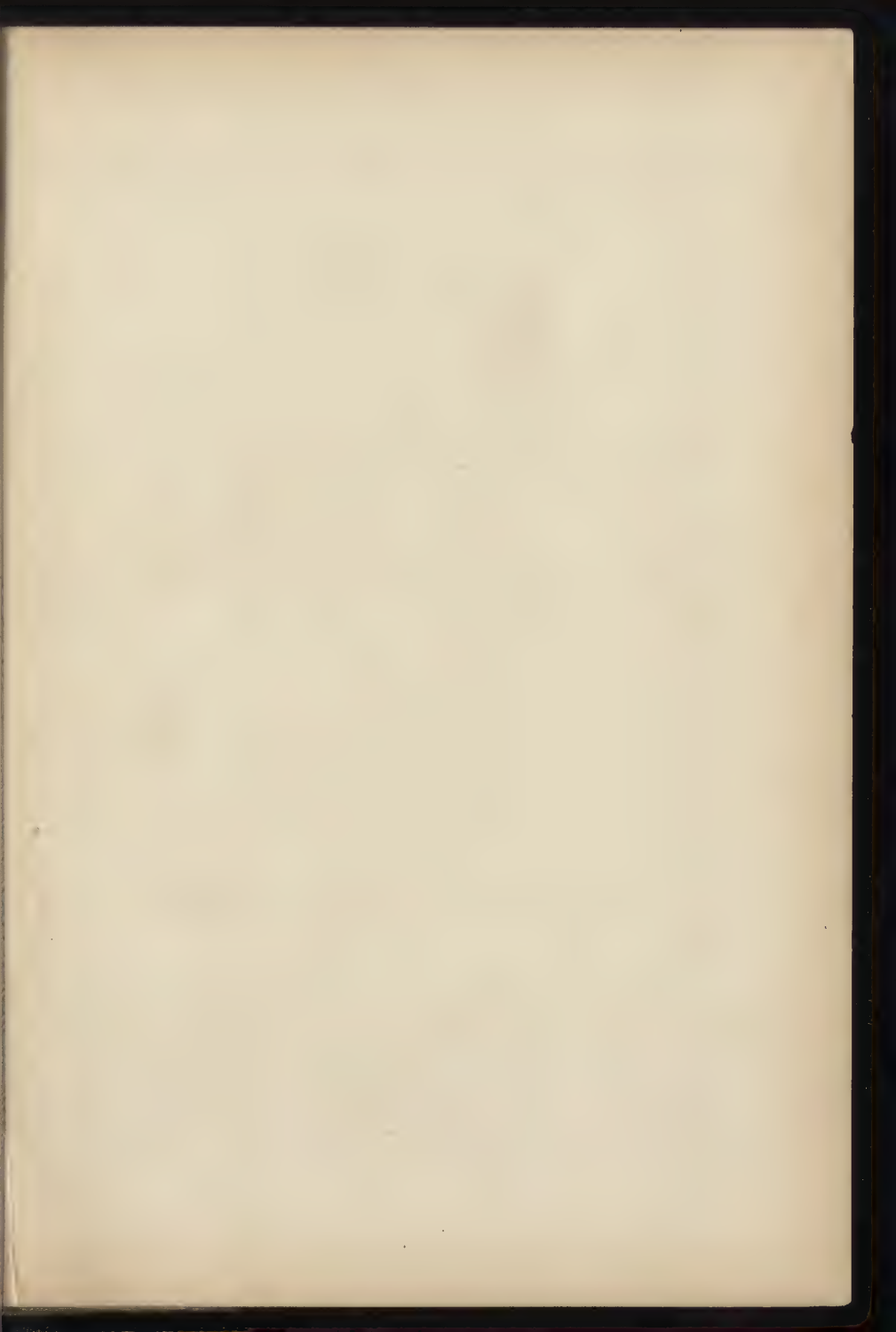
This subject now forms the last of the series, but Mantegna's original scheme included a tenth picture, which he afterwards abandoned, probably because the hall for which the "Triumphs" were intended was not large enough to contain more than nine.

An engraving, however, remains in which a body of Roman citizens, followed by the first ranks of the advancing legions, are represented marching in the conqueror's progress; and the great procession, after reaching its culminating point, is thus brought to a tranquil close. Goethe, who knew the "Triumphs," not indeed in the original, but from Andreani's engravings, and who wrote a masterly criticism on the series, was the first to feel the need of a final scene to satisfy the eye, and to point out that this must have been the artist's original design.

Such, then, are the principal parts of this magnificent work, in which the love of antiquity, which was the ruling power of Mantegna's genius, found its highest expression. It was a sentiment common to many artists in this age of revived learning, but while other men, like Botticelli or Piero della Francesca, saw pagan themes through the colouring of their own medieval fancies, he alone entered thoroughly into the true spirit of ancient art.

A glance at the "Triumphs" is sufficient to show us how profoundly Mantegna had studied classical authors, and how much freedom he had acquired in dealing with his subject.

These ancient Romans are no strangers to him; he has lived among them and mingled with them as freely as with men of his own day, the folds of their draperies, their very





gait and countenance are all familiar to him. The same intimate knowledge of Roman times reveals itself in a hundred details; in the temples and viaducts of the background, in the mythological reliefs which adorn chariots, shields and breast-plates, in tablets bearing Latin inscriptions, in the triumphal arch under which Cæsar passes as he goes on his way. And here we may notice that Andrea, in one of the reliefs of this arch, has again introduced the "Twins" of Monte Cavallo, which during his visit to Rome he had doubtless seen with his own eyes in their time-honoured place on the Quirinal hill.

In the execution of the "Triumphs" we observe the same high degree of finish, as in all his later work; the drapery hangs in the small folds of Greek sculpture, but without stiffness or formality; while the light and transparent colouring is admirably adapted in its softly-shaded tints to the general character of the subject. Evidently in this it was Mantegna's intention to imitate as closely as possible the style of ancient painting. Unfortunately most of the pictures have suffered from re-painting, and at the present day it needs a very minute examination to appreciate the delicacy of the fragments that have been left untouched.

Both in the plastic tendency of form and in the principles of perspective which Mantegna has here successfully applied, we see the result of his earlier studies, modified and restrained by the experience of the thirty years which had passed since the days when he painted the Eremitani frescoes. Nothing can surpass the manner in which the whole of the splendid pageantry of the "Triumphs" is subdued and governed by the laws of composition, till every figure moves in perfect rhythm and harmony of line. We have only to look at the episode of the "Triumphs" by Rubens (in the National Gallery) to see how the subject, released from the severe restraint of Mantegna's art, could degenerate into a Bacchanalian

feast of wild beasts, revellers, and dancing women. But for all its sculptured tendencies and likenesses to a classic frieze, this great series is no procession of marble statues, cold and rigid in their antique beauty. The forms which pass before us in the long array are animated with life and warmth, their faces glow with the fire of human passion in all its endless varieties. Tender and youthful, or worn by age and care, exultant with the joy of victory, or bowed down to earth by a cruel fate, they are men and women like ourselves, and appeal to us by the instincts of a common humanity. In the well-known words of Goethe, "The study of the antique supplies form, nature gives movement and the last touch of life."

For more than a century the "Triumphs" of Mantegna remained in the hall of the palace for which they had been intended, and were seen there both by Vasari and the historian Mario Equicola. On festive occasions they were sometimes moved to the *Castello di Corte*, and in Andrea's lifetime they were used as stage decorations when the comedies of Plautus and Terence were performed at the Court of Mantua.

Several separate episodes of the "Triumphs" were engraved by Mantegna himself, and the complete series became generally known by the publication of the large wood-cuts by Andrea Andreani at the close of the sixteenth century.

In 1628, a short time before the sack of Mantua, the pictures themselves were sold to Charles I., with several other masterpieces of the Gonzaga collection. After that monarch's death on the scaffold they were again sold by the Parliament, but Cromwell bought them for £1,000.* Charles II. placed them in the palace at Hampton Court. There this precious series still remains, irreparably injured by frequent removal and repainting, but

* The Raphael Cartoons only realised £300.

still in beauty and completeness both of design and execution one of the most remarkable works of the Italian Renaissance.

The exact date of the completion of the "Triumphs" is fixed by a fresh grant of land which Francesco bestowed upon Mantegna in February, 1492, with an express mention of the great work which he had at length brought to a happy termination. "If the Marquis had loved him before, he loved him still more now," says Vasari, and in reality Andrea seemed to have attained the highest pitch of honour and good fortune. For once his affairs were prosperous. In 1492 he sold his small property at Padua, and two years later furnished his own beautiful house in the quarter of St. Sebastian. At the same time he came to a final settlement with his Buscoldo creditors and exchanged land with his old enemy Aliprandi. His son, Lodovico, obtained a good appointment as overseer and agent to the Marquis at Cavriana, while Francesco, who was the least satisfactory of the two and frequently caused Andrea anxiety, embraced the artist's profession and became his father's assistant. Lastly, his only daughter, Taddea, was married, on the 4th of July, 1499, with two hundred and sixty ducats as her dowry, to Viano Vianesi, whom he styles "uomo prudente" in his letters.

Besides these children by marriage Andrea had one other son, Gian' Andrea by name, born in his old age after the death of his wife Niccolosia, and whom in his will of 1504 he mentions as being still a child.

His improved circumstances seem to have softened his temper, and the only complaint we find in his letters to the Marquis at this time is that the stones which he had prepared for building in his yard are stolen in broad daylight, one of the thieves whom his son had caught in the act of carrying away his spoil under his mantle being an officer of Francesco's household.

We hear occasionally of his suffering from attacks of illness, but as a painter his powers were at their best, and many of his finest works belong to the period between his return from Rome and the close of the fifteenth century.

Among classical subjects are the two beautiful pictures now in the Louvre, originally executed for the Marchioness Isabella's "studio of the grotto," a room which Andrea, Perugino, and Costa were all employed to decorate, and which became a complete museum of both antique and Renaissance art. Andrea painted several panels for this apartment at Isabella's command, some we are told in imitation of bronze-reliefs, and one in which the prophet Jonah is represented in the act of being cast into the sea; but the "Wisdom Victorious over the Vices" and the "Parnassus," both in the Louvre, are the only works of the series which have come down to posterity. Both closely resemble the "Triumphs" in style of modelling and in delicacy of finish. One is an allegorical composition, such as Botticelli might have painted, in which Minerva and Diana, led by Wisdom bearing a torch, are driving out a tribe of Vices under the forms of centaurs and satyrs, while Justice, Force, and Temperance hover in the air, about to return to earth.

The form of the avenging goddesses is essentially classic in type, and the trees of the background show that loving care in each leaf which entitles Mantegna to a foremost place among the foliage painters of the age. The other, perhaps the most poetic of all Andrea's conceptions, brings before us a pleasant landscape where the Muses dance hand in hand to the music of Apollo's lyre, while Mercury leans on the neck of Pegasus hard by, and Mars and Venus pause from their embraces to listen to the enchanted sound. Brighter tints than Andrea generally employs enliven the scene, and in the light

fluttering drapery and measured step of the dancing nine there is a grace and charm of movement which no contemporary painter ever surpassed.

These groups of dancing nymphs became a favourite motive with Mantegna, and form the subject of one of his engravings as well as of a finished drawing, exceedingly graceful and charming in design, now at Munich. Classical subjects at this time occupied a great part of his thoughts, and some of his finest engravings, the "Battle of the Sea-Gods," "Hercules and Antæus," and the "Bacchanalia," belong to this period. Closely related to these are the beautiful drawings of the British Museum to which Mr. Comyns Carr recently called attention, the "Mars, Diana and Venus," which in ideal beauty of form yields to none of Andrea's designs, and the long frieze-shaped composition of "Calumny," after the pattern of Apelles's last picture, which these artists of the early Renaissance delighted to recall.

Several other precious drawings by Mantegna belong to the Christ Church collection, Oxford. Chief among them is the original composition for his celebrated engraving of the "Entombment," and a fine example of another of his favourite subjects, "Hercules killing the Lion," inscribed *Divo Herculi invicto*. Many more are in the hands of private collectors, and a whole volume containing twenty-six sheets of mythological subjects was exhibited in the Grosvenor Gallery in 1878, by Miss Hannah de Rothschild (now Lady Rosebery).

Among the other drawings of remarkable merit now scattered over Europe, we will only mention the "Judgment of Solomon" in the Louvre, the "Sagrifizio," which forms the chief ornament of the Verona Museum, and the well-known "Judith" of the Uffizi (see page 37), which once belonged to Vasari, and bears the date of February, 1491.

It was not in the nature of Mantegna's art to cast off

a hasty sketch, or to leave to the world faces of rare loveliness drawn in a few pencil strokes as it were at random on the paper. Whether he was engaged on the cartoon of an altar-piece, or on a simple pattern of a cup or fountain, all he achieved was marked by the same patient, untiring labour, the same minute care, above all by the same feeling for beauty in every detail. Many of us remember that exquisite design for a chalice which attracted general attention in one of our last winter exhibitions. It is true the perspective of the Cup was faulty, but this defect was scarcely noticed in the beauty of the work, with which every part of the chalice was covered. Scenes from the life of Christ, cherub heads and elaborate scroll work adorned the border of the Cup. Apostles and prophets were figured on its base, while the stem was studded with rows of lovely babies and angel heads, executed with a grace and delicacy which rendered the whole a perfect marvel of decorative art. And so it is with his larger drawings, whether classical or religious in subject. Each hair in the head of his "Judith" is distinctly drawn, there is the same attention to form in the folds of her falling drapery, or, to take another instance—the fair faces of the youth and maiden in the procession of the *Sagrifizio*. Both are designs in the best spirit of classical art, and remind us of the finest Greek sculpture.

We have said that pagan themes occupied much of Mantegna's imagination during the years immediately following the conclusion of the "Triumphs," but the three large altar-pieces which also belong to this period must not be passed over. In the first place we have the "Madonna della Vittoria," now in the Louvre, perhaps the noblest of all his religious pictures. This altar-piece was painted by order of the Marquis Francesco to commemorate his pretended victory at Fornovo, where he had





THE MADONNA DELLA VITTORIA. BY MANTEGNA. In the Louvre, Paris.

encountered the French, but, far from being victorious, had lost the greater part of his army, and narrowly escaped with his life. A curious circumstance characteristic of the manners of the times is connected with this painting.

A Jew of Villafranca, Daniele Norsa by name, in the year 1495 bought a house in Mantua which had a Madonna painted over the door, and fearing any accidental misfortune to the picture might excite popular displeasure, prudently obtained leave from the bishop to remove the sacred image. Even this step was turned to his prejudice, and on Ascension Day his house was attacked by the mob and narrowly escaped destruction. The Jew appealed to the Marquis for protection, and ultimately his case was brought before a tribunal, which condemned him, by way of reparation for the supposed insult to the Virgin, to place a new picture painted by Mantegna in one of the Mantuan churches. In the meantime the battle of Fornovo took place, and Francesco, who in the hour of danger had vowed to erect a church in Mantua to the Virgin, resolved to gratify popular feeling and give greater effect to the fulfilment of his vow by placing the building on the spot where the Madonna's honour had been slighted. Accordingly he bought Norsa's house, and on the anniversary of the battle, July 6th, 1496, the votive Madonna painted by Mantegna for the occasion was placed above the high altar of the newly erected church with great popular rejoicing. Three hundred years afterwards the French carried off this picture, which was originally intended to celebrate the victory over their nation, in triumph to Paris, where it still remains.

Few perhaps of Andrea's larger works are as generally and deservedly popular. The mild Virgin, in blue hood and mantle, sitting under her leafy bower hung with fruit and coral and gay with twittering birds, is familiar to all

visitors to the Louvre. Both mother and child stretch out their hands in blessing towards the kneeling Marquis, whose life-like portrait excited the universal admiration of contemporaries. Opposite him, the venerable form of St. Elizabeth is seen kneeling at the side of the young St. John, who stands on the carved pedestal of the Virgin's throne, and in the background are the patron saints of Mantua, Andrew and Longinus. More beautiful than either of these are the two warrior saints, Michael and George, who stand in full armour on either side, holding the hem of the Virgin's mantle, and who, with their noble features, manly forms, and flowing masses of fair locks, are perfect types of Christian chivalry—in other words, of that union of strength and tenderness which is held to constitute the heroic character.

The "Virgin" of the National Gallery, long in the possession of different Milanese families, bears a close resemblance, both in style and execution, to the "Madonna della Vittoria," and was probably painted about the same time. Here the Virgin is seated under a red baldacchino between St. Mary Magdalen and the Baptist, who stand erect against a background of dark green orange-trees and silver-clouded sky. The face of the Magdalen is lighted with the glad enthusiasm of her love, and in the foliage we notice the same careful finish as in the bowers of the "Parnassus" and in the leaf-painting of all Mantegna's works.

To the same period and class of picture belongs the "Glorified Madonna" which Andrea painted for the monks of Santa Maria in Organo of Verona, now in the Casa Trivulzi at Milan. Here the Madonna is enthroned on the clouds, with four life-sized saints; a landscape of tall lemon-trees is behind her. A troop of singing boy-angels hover in the air, after the fashion of the Camera degli Sposi frescoes, and one bears a scroll with the inscription:—

"A Mantinia p. an. gracie 1497, 15 Augusti."



VIRGIN AND CHILD, WITH ST. JOHN AND THE MAGDALEN. BY MANTEGNA.
In the National Gallery, London.



The small blue-mantled "Madonna" of Bergamo, and a good portrait of a Gonzaga in the same collection, may have been painted towards the close of the century, to which period the engravings of the "Triumphs" and several other subjects are assigned. Finally, among the labours which occupied the last months of 1499, was the commission to design a monument of Virgil for the chief square of Mantua. The plan originated with the Marchioness Isabella, who consulted the learned Latinists, Pontanus and Vergerius, at Naples, as to the best mode of carrying her scheme into effect. They suggested Mantegna as the natural person to furnish a design for the monument, and he entered warmly into a project so well suited to the spirit of the age. We can hardly imagine a commission more congenial to a painter so imbued with Latin traditions as Mantegna, and the statue which he designed was worthy of the occasion, as the drawing recently discovered in the collection of M. His de la Salle abundantly proves. Virgil is represented crowned with laurel and holding the *Æneid* in his hands, while winged boys on the pedestal at his feet support a tablet with the words:—

"P. Vergilii Maronis a æternæ sui memoriæ imago."

Unfortunately, Andrea never had the satisfaction of seeing this design executed in bronze or marble. Whether Francesco's treasures were expended in wars, or whether Isabella's intention was only a caprice of the moment, the scheme was abandoned, and Mantua remained without a monument of her greatest son.



CHAPTER VI.

LAST WORKS AND DEATH : HIS INFLUENCE ON ART, 1500—1506.

DURING more than forty years Andrea had now lived at Mantua in the service of the Gonzagas. Both at their court and throughout Italy he was held in the highest honour, and enjoyed a degree of favour and consideration which but few artists have known in their lifetime. His children were, with the one exception of Gian' Andrea, grown up and well provided for; he had lands and possessions of his own both in town and country, and what he valued even more—a collection of precious antiquities. Behind him lay a whole lifetime of great works, and although now in his seventieth year his powers as yet showed no trace of weakness or failing. We have seen how rich in works of every branch of art was this last decade of the fifteenth century; how untiring was his activity, and how fresh and inexhaustible the treasures of his imagination. Everything seemed to foretell an old age of honour and prosperity, in which the great master should still charm men by the creations of his brain and hand, and yet as his bodily powers grew weaker should enjoy more of the repose to which he was so well entitled. But this was not to be, and the last few years of Mantegna's lifetime are a weary record of sorrows and misfortune. Again we find him involved in pecuniary difficulties, brought on by his

own extravagance, and very probably by that of his son, Francesco; in order to meet his liabilities he was compelled to part with the beautiful house which he had decorated with his own hand, and to live in lodgings, which he disliked extremely. Yet, with the strange recklessness that formed part of his character, we find him entering into new and imprudent engagements. In March, 1504, he made a will, leaving a sum of money to his son Francesco and the chief part of his fortune to Lodovico, together with the charge of bringing up the child Gian' Andrea, in whose favour he afterwards altered certain provisions. At the same time he left two hundred ducats for the endowment of the chapel of San Giovanni, in Alberti's large church of Sant' Andrea, as a burial-place for himself and his family. Special mention is made of his wife, Niccolosia, who had died some years before; and masses are ordered to be said for the repose of her soul. In August of the same year (1504) he obtained possession of this chapel by a contract with Sigismondo Gonzaga, Bishop of Mantua, and the canons of the church. Its decoration now became his favourite scheme, and it was his intention to paint the walls in fresco and to erect a family monument there. He bought a piece of ground outside to prevent the windows from being blocked up by building, and announced his intention of turning it into a garden, where he could spend his time in summer, and build a small room, where he might keep himself warm in winter, "in order," he adds touchingly, "that I may take a little rest in my old age." But all this expenditure became the cause of fresh difficulties, and added to the burdens under which Andrea already groaned. Other trials came to sadden his old age. His son Francesco incurred the displeasure of the Marquis by some grave misconduct, and neither Andrea's tears nor the intercession of Isabella could prevent his banishment from Mantua in 1505. This disgrace was a heavy blow to Andrea, who

owned that his son had offended grievously, but thought that his fault might have been overlooked in consideration of his own services. "Messer Andrea," wrote Isabella to her husband, "has just now been to see me, so full of tears and so altered in countenance that he seemed to me more dead than alive."

But his activity was undiminished, and, heavy as his heart might be, brain and hand were still the same as ever. We find him returning to a favourite subject of earlier days in the "St. Sebastian," originally ordered by the Bishop of Mantua, but now in possession of the Scarpa family at La Motta, in Friuli. The life-sized figure, lean in proportions and suffering in expression, has a grandeur of its own. At the feet of the saint is a lighted candle, which sends a thin blue smoke upwards, and makes us wonder at its meaning, until we read the words on the scroll which hangs to the coral string above—*Nil nisi divinum stabile est, cætera fumus*.

This, then, was the conclusion to which he had come at the end of that long life full of works and honour; this the conviction that old age and gathering troubles were forcing upon the mind of the great painter, who had seen so clearly and felt so keenly the beauty and the joy of life.

In that same sad year of his son's banishment he commenced another of the classic friezes which he loved to paint. This was the splendid composition known as the "Triumph of Scipio," now in the National Gallery, which a wealthy Venetian named Francesco Cornaro ordered and paid for in part in 1505, but which, to his great indignation, was still in Andrea's studio at the time of his death, when it was seized upon by creditors nearer at hand.

The real subject of this work, executed in chiaroscuro on a background painted to imitate red marble, is the reception of Cybele among the deities of Rome. A colossal bust of the Phrygian goddess is borne in state into the

presence of Scipio, who receives the messenger in consular array; while Claudia Quinta, a Roman lady, kneeling at his feet, welcomes the image with outstretched arms. Every gradation of movement is represented here, from the swift tread of the bearers on whose shoulders the goddess advances, to the motionless forms of the Roman soldiers who stand grouped around Scipio; and nothing is more striking than the skill with which the artist brings this rapid action by degrees to a complete pause. The general character of the piece, its costumes, figures, and draperies, all recall the "Triumphs." It is, as it were, a last echo of the great composition whose harmonies still lingered on in Mantegna's ears.

Before the end of the year Andrea, tired of a wandering life, had again bought a house, this time in the Contrada Unicornio, and settled himself there for the winter, promising to pay the owner three hundred and forty ducats in three instalments. It was an unwise venture, as the issue too soon proved. A plague drove the wealthier Mantuans from the city, provisions became scarce, and his own health began to give way. Still he remained in Mantua and painted on manfully, endeavouring to finish a mythological picture of Comus, which Isabella had ordered. But it was in vain. He could not work fast enough to satisfy his creditors, and when pressed to pay the stipulated sum for his house he was compelled to apply to the Marchioness for help.

Isabella was then at a villa near Cavriana, and Andrea wrote to her in pathetic terms, telling her of his distress, and offering to her for sale the one of all his antiques which he most valued, "*la mia cara Faustina*." Often in brighter days great masters and connoisseurs had wished to buy this bust, but he had refused all their offers, and now since part from it he must, the Marchioness is the only person to whom he can bear to give it up.

Strange as it seems, Isabella did not answer this letter,

and with a meanness unworthy of her wrote to her servant, Jacopo Calandra, telling him to bargain with Andrea and obtain the Faustina at the lowest price possible.

This unkindness cut Mantegna to the heart, and when Calandra communicated Isabella's answer to him, he refused angrily to part with the bust for less than the hundred ducats which had been offered him in former days. Isabella, however, was determined to have it, and on the 1st of August Calandra was able to write:—"Your Excellency will be glad to hear that I have at last obtained possession of Andrea Mantegna's Faustina. He gave the bust into my hands with great reluctance, recommending it to my care with much solicitude, and with such demonstrations of jealous affection that if he were not to see it again for six days I feel convinced he would die." The words were to come true sooner than Isabella or Calandra had expected. Andrea could bear to part with houses and lands, but the marble was dear to him as his own flesh and blood, and the parting with it broke his heart.

He was already ill at the time, and six weeks later he died, on Sunday, the 13th of September, 1506. To the last the old spirit of loyalty to the Gonzagas did not leave him, and his son Francesco, writing to inform the Marquis of the sad event, describes how a few minutes before his death he asked for his master, and grieved much to think that he should never see him again.

Francesco was at that time at Perugia, whither he had gone to meet Pope Julius II., and had little time or thought for the great painter who had just passed away. Isabella scarcely troubled herself more, and in a letter full of joyous congratulations to her husband on his entry into Perugia, merely alludes to Mantegna's death:—"You know Messer Andrea died suddenly a few days after your departure." There were others who felt more deeply and judged more rightly of the loss which the world had sustained in Man-

tegna's death. Albrecht Dürer was at that time in Venice, on his way to visit the great Lombard artist whose engravings had filled him with admiration, and from whom he had learnt perhaps more than from any other master. His purpose was frustrated by the news of Andrea's sudden death, and in later years he was often heard to say that he looked upon this as the saddest event of his whole life. Another graceful tribute to Mantegna's memory was paid by a certain Lorenzo di Pavia, a collector of antiquities and objects of art, who had known Mantegna at the court of Mantua, and who, on hearing of his unexpected death, wrote to Isabella in these terms:—"I grieve deeply over the loss of our Messer Andrea Mantegna, for in truth a most excellent painter, another Apelles, I may say, is gone from us. But I believe that God will employ him elsewhere on some great and beautiful work. For my part, I know that I shall never see again so fine an artist and designer. Farewell."

The melancholy history of Mantegna's difficulties did not end with his death, and his sons had a hard task to satisfy his creditors. One hundred ducats were still owing to the bishop and canons for the mortuary chapel, and Cardinal Gonzaga, Bishop of Mantua, laid an embargo on the contents of his studio. Francesco Mantegna had to obtain the permission of the Marquis to sell the pictures that still remained there, among which he names the "Triumph of Scipio," which Cornaro had never received, the "St. Sebastian," now at La Motta in Friuli, and the famous *Cristo in scurto*.

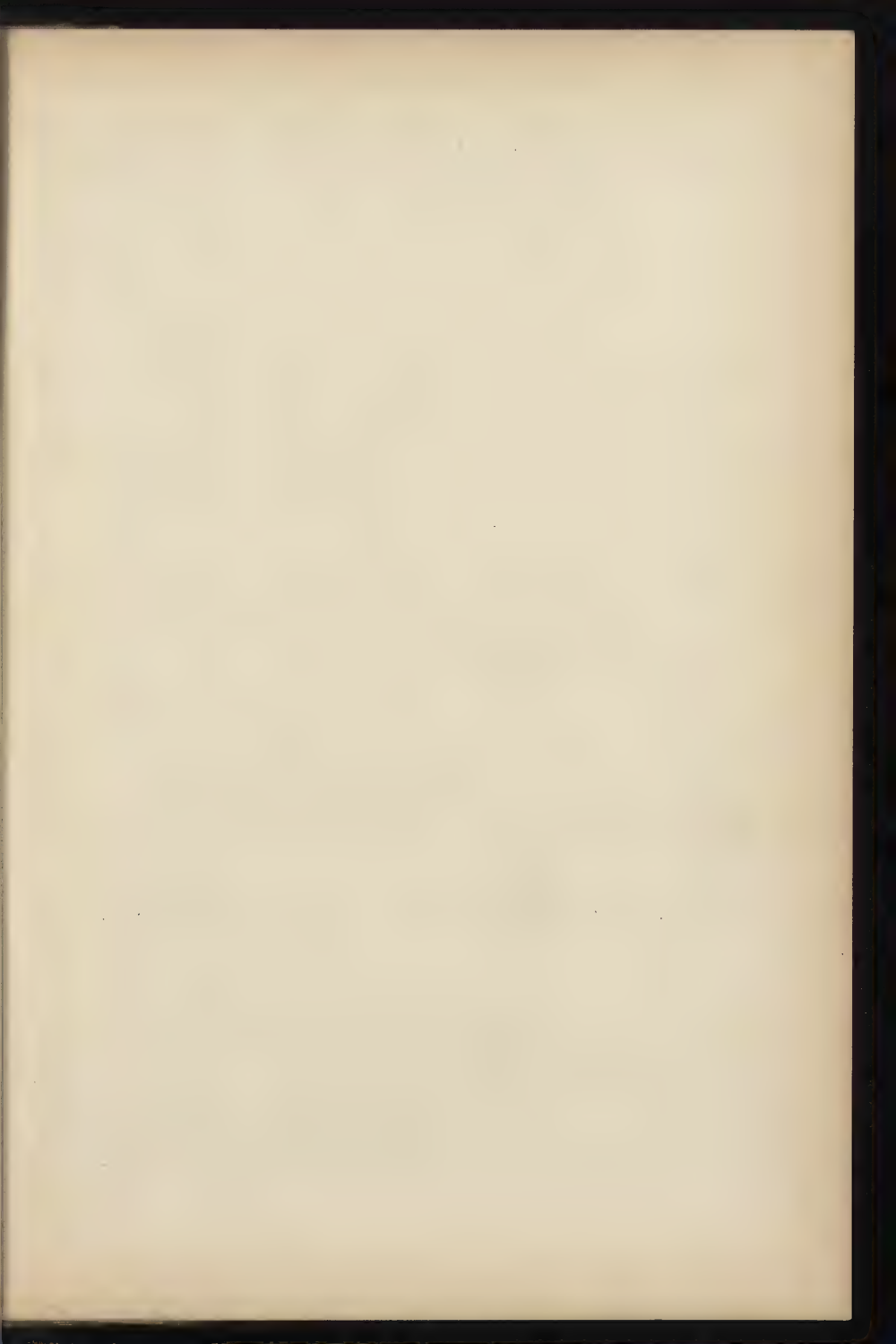
By this means his debts were paid, and a settlement of his affairs concluded. Francesco Gonzaga seems to have behaved kindly, and both Andrea's sons continued in his service, Lodovico as agent, while Francesco succeeded to his father's place, and painted by turns in the palaces of Mantua, Gonzaga, and Marmirolo.

The remains of the great master were buried in his own chapel of Sant' Andrea, where half a century later his grandson placed a bronze bust, supposed to have been the work of the medallist Sperandio, and which, after being taken to Paris in 1797, has been restored to its place on Mantegna's tomb.

The chapel itself is bare and dingy, its walls are white-washed, rubbish heaps are allowed to litter the floor, and the general aspect is of the most cheerless description. But the gloomy surroundings only serve to heighten the imposing grandeur of the bust.

The sculptor has caught the spirit which animated the great master, and has represented Mantegna, after the manner of an old Roman, wearing a laurel wreath on the thick clusters of hair that shade the deeply furrowed brows and massive features with which more than one portrait in his own frescoes has made us familiar. We seem to feel the fiery flashes of that piercing eye bent upon us, and to realise the iron strength and unbending force of the genius which no difficulty could dismay, and no labour exhaust.

Sperandio's bust is almost the only thing in Mantua which still speaks of Andrea. The perishing frescoes are still to be seen in the deserted palace, and the walls of the house in which he once lived are standing; but in this city, where he painted for nearly fifty years, his name is forgotten, and while every child in the streets will talk to you of Giulio Romano and the Hall of the Giants, scarcely a creature in the place has ever heard Mantegna's name. His Faustina is preserved among other antiques in the public museum, where visitors can see for themselves the classic outline of the features which he loved so well; but the custodian, who unlocks the hall, and has much to say of the many statues, passes by this one in silence, or wonders why it is we linger before this bust, unmindful of the tragic





THE CRUCIFIXION. BY MANTEGNA. In the Louvre, Paris.

story which has invested the marble with so deep an interest.

The name of Mantegna, however, is not one that depends on local fame, and there can be no difference of opinion as to the important place which he holds in the history of the Renaissance. We have only to consider how great and widespread was the influence which his works exercised on contemporary art both in Italy and Germany. If we examine the different schools of North Italy we shall find that there is scarcely one which did not receive some new impulse from his powerful genius.

His son Francesco followed in his father's steps, and worked in the same lines without ever rising above the level of mediocrity. The few scholars and assistants he had in Mantua imitated his example, and whatever remnants of art were still to be found in Padua bore the stamp of Andrea's earliest style.

In Venice we recognise his vigour and precision of outline, and the classical tendency of his types, not only in the works of his brothers-in-law, the Bellini, but in those also of the rival Murano painter, Luigi Vivarini. Mantegna and Buonconsiglio at Vicenza, Ercole Grandi and Cosimo Tura at Ferrara, alike formed their style upon his, while the best Veronese masters were all either his followers or imitators.

We know that Caroto and Bonsignori assisted him in the execution of his later works, while his influence is even more apparent in the works of Liberale, Girolamo dai Libri, and Francesco Morone. The masterpiece of the last-named artist, the frescoes on the walls and ceiling of the sacristy of Santa Maria in Organo, at Verona, are indeed exact imitations of the style of decoration adopted by Mantegna in the Camera degli Sposi. We trace the same all-prevailing Mantegnesque in the works of Lorenzo Costa, who spent some years of his life in Mantua, and if we are

to believe Vasari it is to the stimulus of Mantegna's example that we owe the inspiration which made a painter of Francia.

The link which binds Mantegna to the Umbrians is as yet uncertain, but even if Melozzo da Forlì in his Roman frescoes derived no help or suggestion from Andrea, Giovanni Santi's stanzas remain to show us how intimate was his acquaintance with the Paduan master's works.

If from contemporary art we pass to the culminating period of the Renaissance, we find Raphael taking him as his model in more than one instance. The likeness of the boy-angels of the *Camera degli Sposi* to the famous cherubs of the "*Madonna di San Sisto*" has been frequently remarked, and in the bearers of the dead Christ, who walk backwards in the Borghese "*Entombment*," we find a distinct reminiscence of Andrea's great engraving.

Again, in the treatment of antique themes, Raphael often approaches Mantegna, and we have little doubt that both he and Leonardo had closely studied the works of their illustrious predecessor.

Perhaps the actual connection between Mantegna and Michelangelo is less capable of demonstration, but the strength and energy of expression which were so remarkable features in the genius of both men, as well as a certain resemblance in their characters, form a link which binds them together.

A very different artist, Correggio, who married a Mantuan wife, owes his knowledge of the laws of perspective and composition in a large measure to the study of Mantegna's works, and, whether or not he visited Mantua himself, probably derived the first idea of the dome-painting for which he became famous from the ceiling of the *Camera degli Sposi*.

But this is not all. The engravings of Mantegna spread his influence beyond the limits of Italy into countries north of the Alps. There was a robustness, vigour, and grave

earnestness of purpose, as well as a fantastic element in his art, which attracted the Teutonic mind, and it is perhaps not too much to say that he influenced German art more than any other Italian painter.

We have already alluded to Albrecht Dürer's admiration for his works and anxiety to become personally acquainted with him. A further proof of the fascination which drew him to Mantegna appears in the highly-finished copies of the "Bacchanalia" and "Battle of the Sea Gods," which Dürer executed with his own hand, and in the St. John of "The Entombment" which, unable to forget, he introduced in his own "Crucifixion" of 1508. Professor Colvin has pointed out how much he learnt from the Italian master in the delineation of passionate movement, and how close is the affinity between the avenging angels of Dürer's "Apocalypse" and the angry Tritons of Mantegna's engraving.

Nor is Dürer alone among northern painters in his adoption of Mantegnesque motives. Holbein repeatedly availed himself of these episodes of the "Triumphs" which he knew from Andrea's own engravings in his works at Basle and Lucerne; and a portfolio of Mantegna's works was numbered among the treasures of art in Rembrandt's possession.

More singular is the admiration which Rubens conceived for an artist with whom he can have had few points in common, yet we find him visiting Mantua in order to study Andrea's works, and reproducing a scene from the "Triumphs" after his own fashion.

We have already seen the great honour in which Andrea was held during his life-time. That he was equally esteemed by the succeeding generation we learn from the verses of Ariosto, who places him next to Leonardo in his "Orlando." High as the praise is, we cannot think it excessive, for Mantegna stands half-way between those men who first brought art to life again, and those who carried it to

the highest degree of perfection, and he occupies the foremost place among the artists of the mid-Renaissance, who saw how much was wanting before further progress could be attained, and allowed no difficulties to stop them in their endeavour to acquire knowledge.

With this end in view no research was dull, no toil wearisome. He embraced the driest studies with the passionate ardour of his nature, and gave life to the scientific problems which he attempted to solve by the very force of his great zeal.

At the same time he brought to the task a degree of culture rare among the men of his class, and both his friendship with scholars and antiquarians and his own classical studies were productive of the most important results for Italian painting. He is the chief representative in art of that revival of learning which was the leading intellectual impulse of the age; and, by bringing this influence to bear upon painting, he won a great step in the history of its development. First among the artists of the Renaissance, he saw with unerring instinct the path by which art would attain her final triumphs. Early in his career the conviction had forced itself upon his soul that the most perfect models of beauty are to be sought in antique art, but that this very perfection can only be reached by a minute and faithful study of nature. To reconcile anew these two principles, to combine in his work classic grace and human action, became the aim of his life, the task which he most nearly achieved in the "Triumphs"—although even there he is not always successful.

"We are conscious," wrote Goethe, "of a sense of conflict, but this conflict is surely the highest in which ever artist was engaged." The perfect union of the two principles was to be effected by artists of the next generation, and where Mantegna had sown Raphael and Leonardo were to reap.

It is this sense of conflicting elements, this occasional antagonism between the ideal form after which he strove and the actual fact present before his eyes, which has given rise to so much mistaken criticism of Mantegna's work. By some critics of the very first rank he is called a mere realist, while on the other hand the old reproach that he neglected the study of real life to copy statues has been repeated till it has grown wearisome.

Although it is easy to trace their origin, both charges are equally unjust. No man had ever a more thorough knowledge of nature, or was more keenly alive to the minutest details of everyday life around him. But something he felt was needed to lift this changeful scene, with its seething throng of human thought and action, into the atmosphere of perfect art.

It is just that touch of grace, that power to ennoble and refine which the Greeks understood so well, that Mantegna felt and sought after in days of long and arduous toil. If, at times a certain rigidity of form, a carelessness of desire to please, is visible in his work, it is because in his anxiety to obtain his end he occasionally omitted these minor matters. But to say that Mantegna was alike destitute of feeling for beauty and of spiritual perception appears to us simple blindness.

In knowledge and mastery of the human form, in skill and finish of workmanship, in wealth of imagery and creative thought, few have ever surpassed him.

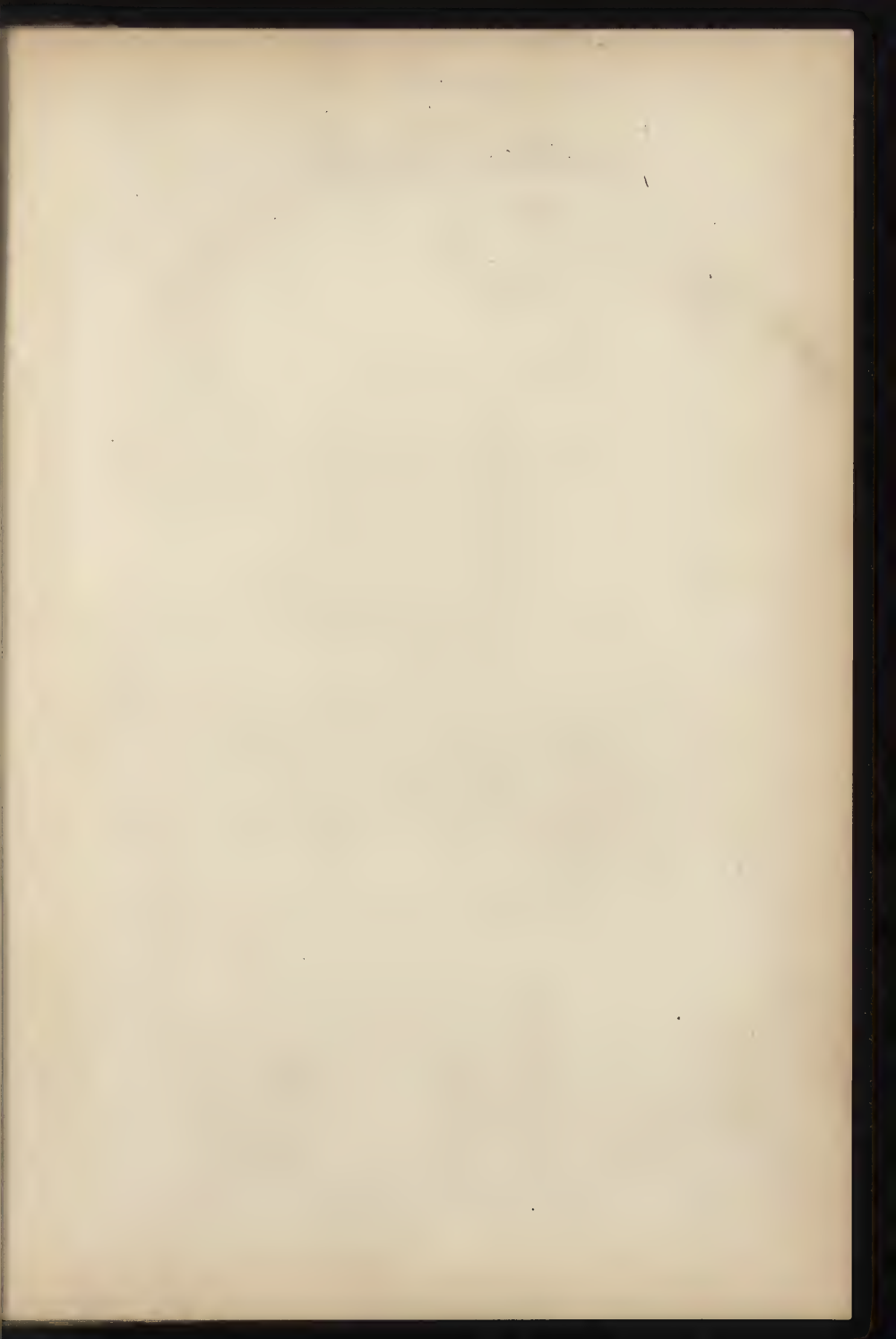
In dramatic energy and intensity of expression he stands unrivalled by any but Michelangelo. Every variety of emotion, every passion that can swell the breast of man is included within the range of his experience. He knew where to seek the purest springs of joy, and in darker hours his strong soul had fathomed the lowest depths of the most unutterable anguish. The sportive dances of laughing cherubs and nymphs, the pleasures and pains of such

mythical creatures as Tritons and Nereids, satyrs and sea-monsters, the sublime and rapt devotion of a Magdalen, the heroism of a Sebastian, were all familiar to him. He enters in the fullest manner into the exultant joy of the victors returning with their long array of spoils and captives from the fight, and yet in the midst of the mighty triumphal procession he pauses to show us the innocent child stretching out its little arms to its mother.

But more than all he loved to paint the rage of violent passion, the wild gestures of uncontrollable grief. There are certain figures into which he seems to have concentrated either the tempest of the most ungovernable fury or the agony of the bitterest despair. Once seen, these creations of his brain refuse to loose their hold on our imaginations, and remain to haunt us with their terrible forms, just as the wailing St. John of "The Entombment" was ever present to Albrecht Dürer's mind.

The very greatness of Mantegna's genius, its immense strength and power, may in itself be the cause that he is not strictly speaking a popular artist. His works have never been, perhaps they will never become, the enthusiastic object of general worship. But within the last few years the number of his admirers has increased steadily, and his high merit has received the fullest recognition from some of our most cultured writers.

That this circle will widen year by year, as a larger number of students are drawn to examine for themselves those works of Mantegna which are fortunately within the reach of us all, we feel confident. It is scarcely necessary to add the expression of our conviction that to those who attentively consider them, no works yield a more genuine and lasting pleasure, while assuredly there are none that better repay the devotion of a life-long study.





FRANCESCO RAIBOLINI.

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CHAPTER I.

EARLY ART IN BOLOGNA, A.D. 1300—1450.

FROM the earliest days of the revival of Italian painting the city of Bologna was distinguished for the cultivation of art, and could boast a regular succession of native painters. The names of several of these men have been preserved by old writers, and we hear of a Guido, a Ventura, and Ursone, who flourished in the thirteenth century. But the honour of having been the real founder of the school is ascribed by the historian Malvasia to a miniaturist known by the name of Franco Bolognese, who lived in the time of Dante and Giotto. Since, however, none of his works have come down to the present day, we have no opportunity of studying his style, and all that we know is that he was a pupil of the miniaturist Oderisio da Gubbio, and is said by Dante to have eclipsed his master in the same way that Giotto surpassed Cimabue.

When Virgil and Dante meet Oderisio expiating the sin of pride in purgatory, he tells them mournfully that the pictures which Franco now paints are fairer than his own, and that the honour once his now belongs to his scholar. So it has been in Dante's own city of Florence,

where once Cimabue held undisputed possession of the field, and now the fame is all Giotto's. For what after all is the voice of earthly fame? Nothing but an idle breath of wind that blows first from one quarter, then from another, ever fitful and inconstant.

But if Franco Bolognese's only hope of immortality rests on Dante's noble lines, the works of his pupils are still to be seen in Bologna, and afford us some idea of native art in these early times. Chief among them was Vitale, who painted in the first half of the fourteenth century, and whose few remaining pictures are marked by a softness and delicacy of workmanship which reveal the Umbrian origin of the school of Gubbio. A "Madonna and Angels," painted by him in the year 1320 for the ancient church of the Madonna del Monte, and now preserved in the Gallery of Bologna, has a sweetness and humility of expression which approaches contemporary Sienese art, and the faces of his virgins are not unworthy precursors of Francia's Madonna. The same manner was further developed in the paintings of his best scholar, Lippo Dalmasii, whose virgins acquired so wide a reputation as to win for him the surname of "Lippo delle Madonne."

This artist, who lived at the close of the fourteenth century, and painted between 1376 and 1410, was held in universal respect for the holiness of his life and character. His devout habits are recorded by Malvasia, who tells us that, before commencing a picture of the Virgin, he invariably spent the night in prayer and fasting, and received communion on the morning of the day itself. In his lifetime he was the most popular artist of Bologna, and his pictures were so much in request that he could scarcely paint fast enough to supply the demand. "No family was considered rich in Bologna," says Malvasia, "which did not possess one of his Madonnas."

After Lippo's death his Madonnas were revered as sacred

images, and were only uncovered on festivals dedicated to the Virgin. Several are still to be seen in the ancient churches of Bologna, and a lunetto of the "Virgin between St. Sixtus and St. Benedict" over the portal of San Procolo, is pointed out as the very picture which excited the admiration of Pope Clement VIII. On returning from the conquest of Ferrara, he is said to have paused before Lippo's "Virgin," and, saluting it with the utmost devotion, to have exclaimed that no other images ever touched him as deeply as those painted by the old Bologna master. In later days, Guido professed an extraordinary veneration for Lippo's Madonnas, and often declared that some supernatural influence must have guided the artist's pencil, since no modern painter could ever succeed in designing a figure of so much purity and holiness.

In spite of these enthusiastic expressions it is impossible to give Lippo a high place among his contemporaries, and this Fra Angelico of Bologna is as far below the friar of St. Marco as the school of his native city is inferior to that of Florence.

One of Lippo's pictures, originally in the Ercolani Palace at Bologna, is now in the National Gallery, and may be taken as a fair specimen of his style. The Virgin, embracing her child, appears in mid-air surrounded by a circular glory, angels hover above, and a flowery meadow lies below. There is a good deal of religious feeling and maternal tenderness in the Madonna's face, and some attempt at rendering natural movement, without either beauty of type or skill of workmanship.

Side by side with the mystic traditions of the Madonna painter we trace a more vigorous vein in the early school of Bologna, and see decided proofs of the Giottesque influences which had already reached its artists. This Florentine tendency is prominent in the works of both Simone dai Crocifissi and Jacopo degli Avanzi, the only

two other Bolognese painters of this period who deserve mention.

According to Malvasia, Simone executed nothing but crucifixes, and although other paintings at Bologna are attributed to him, this was no doubt the chief branch of art in which he was engaged. The best of his crucifixes are those in San Giacomo Maggiore, and in the fourth of the seven churches belonging to the ancient pile of San Stefano, in both of which he to a great extent follows Giotto's example, but retains much of the bad taste of Byzantine art in the emaciation of the figure and the grimace of the attendant saints.

Much of the same ugliness of type, accompanied by greater truth and character, is visible in the curious "Crucifixion" on gold ground, ascribed to Jacopo degli Avanzi, in the Colonna Gallery at Rome, and in the other altarpieces which bear his name at Bologna. The personality of this artist has been a cause of endless controversy, but at least it has been shown that Vasari is clearly wrong in confusing him with d'Avanzo of Verona, who assisted Altichiero in painting the chapel of St. George at Padua. Whether Avanzi of Bologna is identical with the Jacobus Pauli who painted the "Coronation of the Virgin" in San Giacomo Maggiore, is a matter of small importance; but what we know for certain is, that a Bolognese painter by name Jacopo, whom Vasari probably rightly calls Avanzo, was the best of all the different artists who painted in that most interesting of all Bologna churches, the Madonna della Mezzaratta. This small chapel, called by Lanzi the Campo-Santo of Bologna, was built in the twelfth century outside the Porta San Mammolo, and decorated with frescoes in the fourteenth by a succession of native painters. Vasari alludes to it more than once in his "Lives" as the *Casa di Mezzo*, and speaks of the series painted there by Jacopo d'Avanzo, Cristofano, Simone, and at a later period by Galassi of Ferrara.

The frescoes of the Mezzaratta were no doubt the most important works of art achieved by early Bolognese painters, and—although their execution is too rude, and their present condition too imperfect to allow of comparison with the productions of Giotto and his scholars at Padua and Assisi—the scanty fragments that remain are still of the deepest interest to the student.

The most celebrated artists of later ages who had the advantage of seeing these frescoes in a comparatively good state of preservation are said to have held them in the highest esteem. Michelangelo himself visited the chapel and praised its paintings in the warmest terms, while the Carracci exerted themselves strenuously to save them from destruction. Unfortunately, later generations have been less mindful of their condition. The roof of the church was taken off some years ago and the upper part used as a granary, while most of the frescoes were whitewashed and many entirely obliterated.

At the present moment the chapel of Mezzaratta is attached to a villa, which was for many years the property of the Italian Minister, Cavaliere Minghetti. This accomplished statesman took every possible means to save these relics of early art from further destruction, and by his care several frescoes were recovered from the coat of whitewash which concealed them.

The site of the chapel itself is so picturesque, and the views from the hill of Mezzaratta are so full of beauty, that no traveller should leave Bologna without making a pilgrimage to this shrine. A steep ascent along a path lined with acacias leads from the gate of San Mammolo to the garden of Villa Minghetti, and on a summer's day, when nightingales are singing in the acacia thicket and the air is sweet with myrtle and orange-blossom, there is not a pleasanter spot in all Bologna. Below, the domes and spires of the ancient city rise above its arcaded streets, and

the eye is at once arrested by the quaint forms of the twin leaning towers, Garisenda and Asinelli, which were already old in Dante's lifetime. All around the plains stretch their vast expanse, softly shadowed by passing clouds, far away towards Ferrara and Modena, excepting where some rocky spur descends from the Apennines, and looking up an opening valley we catch a glimpse of a jagged peak crowned with snow. Mezzaratta itself has an additional claim on our interest from having been the favourite resort of the Franciscan monk, Bernardino da Siena, whose religious revival at Bologna was one of the most important events in the early part of the fourteenth century, and who frequently preached in this humble sanctuary, which could scarcely hold the crowds that flocked to hear him.

Bernardino's preaching and his affection for the spot may have been one cause of the celebrity which the church of Mezzaratta acquired in those days, but the oldest painting on the walls takes us back a whole century before his time. It is a large "Nativity" painted over the door by Vitale and signed with his name. The composition chiefly adheres to the Byzantine type, with a few variations, as in the action of Joseph, who is represented pouring water into the bowl for the washing of the Child. Its execution is feeble, as is the case with most early Bolognese paintings, but in the graceful type of the Virgin's head and in the kneeling angels we recognise Vitale's striving after a more ideal form.

On the southern wall an artist named Cristofano, whose style as far as it is possible to judge more resembles that of the Ferrara school, painted scenes from the book of Genesis. Below these we have a series of subjects from the history of Joseph, Moses, and the Life of Christ, all painted by the same hand, and bearing in one corner the name of Jacobus, and the date 1404.

Of these the two most striking are the "Miracle of the Pool of Bethesda" and the "Healing of the Paralytic." In the former, a sick man stands in the middle of the pool lifting his hands in prayer, and the cripple who sits up in bed by the side of the healing waters looks towards Christ with an air of helpless entreaty. In the latter, the roof of the house in which the Saviour is teaching his disciples is uncovered, and the sick of the palsy is being let down by cords. To the right he is seen walking away healed, bearing a mattress on his shoulders. In both of these scenes—indeed all through the series—the head of Christ is strikingly noble and dignified, while not even the artist's ignorance of the simplest elements of drawing and colouring can detract from the originality and life of the representations. Each head is individual in expression and character, and the whole composition is marked by the pleasing naïveté of very early art, and an evident anxiety to shake off the fetters of conventional types.

Simone is said by Vasari to have painted the later scenes of the Passion below Jacopo's frescoes, and may have been the artist of the "Last Supper," which is still visible, but most of his work has perished, and whatever else has escaped destruction belongs to the middle of the fifteenth century, and owes its existence to Galasso Galassi, or other Ferrarese painters.

The most remarkable point in the frescoes of Mezzaratta, and the real cause of their value, is that, in spite of all the injury they have sustained, they are decidedly superior in merit to the contemporary panel-pictures in the Gallery and churches of Bologna, and thus enable us to form a better judgment of early Bolognese art. Here we see it inferior, it is true, in every respect to the schools then flourishing at Florence and Siena, but still possessing a force and individual character which inspires interest and promises well for the future.

During the greater part of the fourteenth century no native painter of any genius arose, and the pictures of this date in the Bologna Gallery are principally by unknown followers of Lippo Dalmasii. The only names preserved there are those of Pietro Lianori and Michele di Matteo Lambertini, who painted between 1450 and 1470, and in whose work we trace some likeness to the contemporary Siena school, as well as a marked difference from Avanzi's manner. The same may be said of the picture of "St. Ursula and her Companions," a weak but not unpleasing work, painted by Santa Caterina Vigri, a Bolognese nun, chiefly remarkable as the only woman-artist who ever attained the honours of canonization.

Towards the middle of the fifteenth century a new element was introduced into Bolognese art by the Ferrarese masters, whom the patronage of the Bentivoglio family attracted from the neighbouring city. The court of the Este princes was already one of the most brilliant in Italy, and had become a favourite centre for artists, who were employed to decorate the different palaces of the ducal house in the same way that Mantegna was engaged on the castles of the Gonzagas at Mantua.

Piero della Francesca had himself painted in Duke Borso's Schifanoia (Sans-Souci) palace, and both his presence and the all-pervading influence of Mantegna, who had known several of the best Ferrarese artists, had contributed in a large measure to mould the school of native artists. These different elements were now imported to Bologna by the Ferrara painters who migrated there. One of the first was Galasso Galassi, who painted the later scenes from the Passion in the church of Mezzaratta about the year 1450, and who may have been the painter of the graceful "Sposalizio," which is one of the best-preserved frescoes still to be seen there. About the same time an artist of greater merit, Francesco

Cossa, was commanded by Giovanni Bentivoglio to restore an ancient picture of Lippo known as the "Madonna del Baraccano," and Ercole Grandi was employed on the frescoes of the Garganelli chapel in the church of San Pietro.

With these Ferrara masters came a Paduan artist, also one of the painters of the Schifanoia, who had been trained in the school of Squarcione and had worked with Mantegna in the Eremitani. This was Marco Zoppo, who moved to Bologna in 1471, and remained there twenty years, during which period he painted many of his principal works, and probably became acquainted with the goldsmith, Francia, whose first master he is said, by some, to have been.*

But the most important of all the painters who came to Bologna from Ferrara was Lorenzo Costa, whose friendship with Francia was productive of rich results, and with whom he lived for many years in a constant interchange of artistic ideas. Born at Ferrara in 1460, Costa came as a young man to Bologna and entered the service of Giovanni Bentivoglio II., who employed him to decorate his palace with scenes from the Iliad. During the next twenty years Costa was actively engaged in Bologna. In 1488 he finished an altar-piece for the chapel of the Bentivogli in the church of San Giacomo Maggiore, and a few years later painted the allegorical compositions representing "The Triumph of Life and Death," and various other works in the great Basilica of San Petronio.

In many of these we already see signs of new and higher qualities which were the direct fruit of Francia's influence, although in technical acquirements the Bologna master was at that time still inferior to Costa.

We have so far traced the rise of early Bolognese art throughout the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, and

* Crowe and Cavalcaselle doubt that Francia studied under Zoppo.

watched the gradual development of a school of painters who remained far behind their contemporaries in Florence and Siena, and at the best never rose above mediocrity. But in Francia, Bologna was for the first time to have an artist of the highest order, and who would take his place among the best Florentines of the day, rivalling even Perugino's genius, and winning the praise of Raphael; an artist not indeed of great inventive faculty or wide range of powers, but who, in pure and tender feeling, in elevation of aim and thought, in the expression of the deepest religious emotion, was to find few equals in the history of art.





CHAPTER II.

EARLY LIFE AND WORKS, A.D. 1450—1500.

FRANCESCO di Marco Raibolini, commonly called Il Francia, was born at Bologna in the year 1450. His father was a carpenter, but although belonging to the artisan class his family was highly respected and owned lands in the neighbourhood. After the practice of many Florentine painters, Francia began life in the goldsmith's shop, but unlike Botticelli and Pollaiuolo, did not turn his attention to art until he had reached middle age and had acquired considerable reputation in his own trade.

Several writers have asserted that he took his surname from the goldsmith under whom he served his apprenticeship, but it seems more probable that Francia was merely the popular abbreviation of Francesco, and the supposition is confirmed by documents recently found in the archives of Bologna.

His talents soon attracted attention and before long he became skilled in cutting dies, designing medals, working in *niello* and every department of the goldsmith's art. At the same time the charms of his person and character won general favour and greatly contributed to the success of his career. Contemporary writers describe him as strikingly handsome in appearance, and gifted with a sweetness of disposition and rare eloquence which could not fail to captivate his hearers. The wit and liveliness of his con-

versation had the power to drive away the saddest moods and brighten the darkest hours. In this manner he became a general favourite, and he numbered members of the noblest families of Bologna among his intimate friends.

At the time Francia grew up the power of the Bentivogli family was supreme in Bologna. This proud house claimed descent from King Enzo, the unfortunate son of the Emperor Frederico II., whose long captivity, vain attempts at escape, and loves with the fair Lucia di Viadogolo have thrown a romantic charm over the grim walls of the Palazzo del Podestà. Nothing less than the attainment of sovereign power could content the Bentivogli in the fifteenth century, and after a long struggle with the Popes, who claimed the supremacy of Bologna, they finally succeeded in accomplishing their object. The reigning prince was now Giovanni Bentivoglio II., who had assumed the reins of government in 1463, and was undisputed master of the city. Although his tyranny became hateful to the people, and ultimately proved the cause of his ruin, he was a liberal and munificent patron of Francia, and rivalled the princes of the house of Este by the encouragement which he gave to the fine arts. He soon discovered the rising genius of the young goldsmith, and appointed him Master of the Mint, an office which, in spite of many vicissitudes in public affairs, Francia retained to the end of his life. Other distinctions fell to his share. In 1483, and again in the year 1489, he was elected steward of the goldsmiths' guild, a further proof of the esteem and honour with which his countrymen regarded him. By this time he was already married, since his sons Giacomo and Giulio were born, the former before, and the latter in, 1487; but we hear no further particulars and know nothing of his wife excepting that her name was Caterina.

Besides coining money and designing medals for Giovanni Bentivoglio, Francia showed his fine taste and artistic

powers in many works both in gold and silver enamels, and especially in *niello*, "often introducing as many as twenty figures of excellent proportion and graceful design into a space scarcely two fingers high." Most of these precious works of art perished in the destruction of the Bentivogli's palace at the time of their expulsion, and the famous silver *pax*, which Francia executed at immense cost for the wedding of Giovanni Sforza and Lucrezia Borgia, has disappeared, but two smaller ones are still preserved in the Gallery of Bologna, and are interesting specimens of their kind. One bearing a representation of the Resurrection, surrounded by a wreath of delicate foliage, was executed on the occasion of the marriage of Bartolommeo Felicini and Dorotea Ringhieri, as we learn by the arms of these families which are engraved upon the work. The other is engraved with the Sforza and Bentivogli arms and the letters M. Z., *Messer Zoane*, and was probably a wedding gift from Giovanni Bentivoglio to his bride Ginevra Sforza. The Crucifixion is worked in niello on this pax, and both in the sorrowing angels hovering round the cross and in the saints below we recognise the type of head which Francia's Madonnas have rendered familiar, while the landscape in the background shows the pictorial bent of the goldsmith's mind.

Andrea Mantegna's visit to Bologna in 1472 is said to have first inspired Francia with the wish to become a painter, but Vasari tells us in the same breath that our master's first painting was not executed until 1490, when he was forty years old.

The actual honour of having first given Francia instruction in oil painting has been assigned to different artists, principally to Marco Zoppo and Lorenzo Costa, both of whom, we have seen, were living at Bologna about 1480. Little affinity exists between the Squarcionesque master's style and that of Francia, but it is very possible that he may

have been acquainted with the goldsmith and have given him his first lessons. Francia's connection with Lorenzo Costa was of a much closer kind, and Ferrarese models had a large share in his future development. But his first essays in painting are so purely original in character and so free from foreign influences that we need not seek for any cause to explain the reason of their existence, or ask what master had a share in their production. He probably acquired the rudiments of tempera and oil painting from either Zoppo or another of the humbler men who frequented his workshop, and immediately tried his hand on small panels before venturing on the larger pictures in which his adoption of Costa's method is apparent. These early works are very rare, but one excellent instance is to be seen in the "St. Stephen" of the Borghese Gallery, Rome. This interesting little piece was evidently one of his first efforts executed at a time when he was unskilled in the rules of composition and technical knowledge. The hand of the worker in metal is plainly seen in the sharp outline and polished surface of the panel, in the cold, hard brightness of the deacon's red dalmatic which St. Stephen wears, and in the elaborate ornament of its embroideries. There is no attempt at rendering physical agony in the form of the kneeling martyr quietly raising his clasped hands as the stones fall heavily to the ground beside him. Even St. Stephen's countenance is marked by a certain absence of expression, and is without the rapt devotion of Perugino's faces, or the yearning gentleness of Francia's own Madonnas. Yet there is a calm devoutness in the martyr's bowed head, which seems to reflect the earnestness of the prayer which the parted lips have just breathed, and which in its very simplicity is full of touching beauty. Already we feel the presence of that strong religious sentiment which had first animated the creations of earlier masters, and of which Francia was to be almost the last exponent in the art of Italy.

Another work belonging to this early period is the portrait of Bartolommeo Bianchini, formerly in the Northwick collection under the name of Raphael. This personage was a Bolognese senator of considerable culture, whose poetry earned some reputation in his days, and who wrote flattering verses in praise of Francia's genius. We have a further proof of the friendship that existed between them in the small "Holy Family" at Berlin, inscribed with the words, *Bartholomei sum(pte) Bianchini maxima matrom hic vivit manibus Francia picta tuis*. "Here—painted by thy hands, O Francia, at the cost of Bartolommeo Bianchini—lives the greatest of mothers."

The Madonna holds the child erect on a parapet, while St. Joseph stands behind, much in the same style of composition as countless Holy Families, by Giovanni Bellini, a painter with whom Francia had more than one feature in common. Here again we notice the same sharpness of outline, high polish, and want of shadow that recall the goldsmith's art, but the general method of laying on colour and the red glow of the flesh-tints which marks all Ferrarese work, point unmistakably to the influence of Lorenzo Costa's example. During the next twenty years these two men worked side by side in Bologna, and profited by a mutual exchange of ideas which has few counterparts in art history. While Costa gave Francia the benefit of his wider experience and greater knowledge, he received more than he could impart from the nobler aims and more refined feeling of the Bologna artist. Before long the pupil was to surpass the master, but we never hear of the intimacy between the two being marred by any jealousy or ill-feeling, and the unbroken harmony in which they lived reflects credit on both.

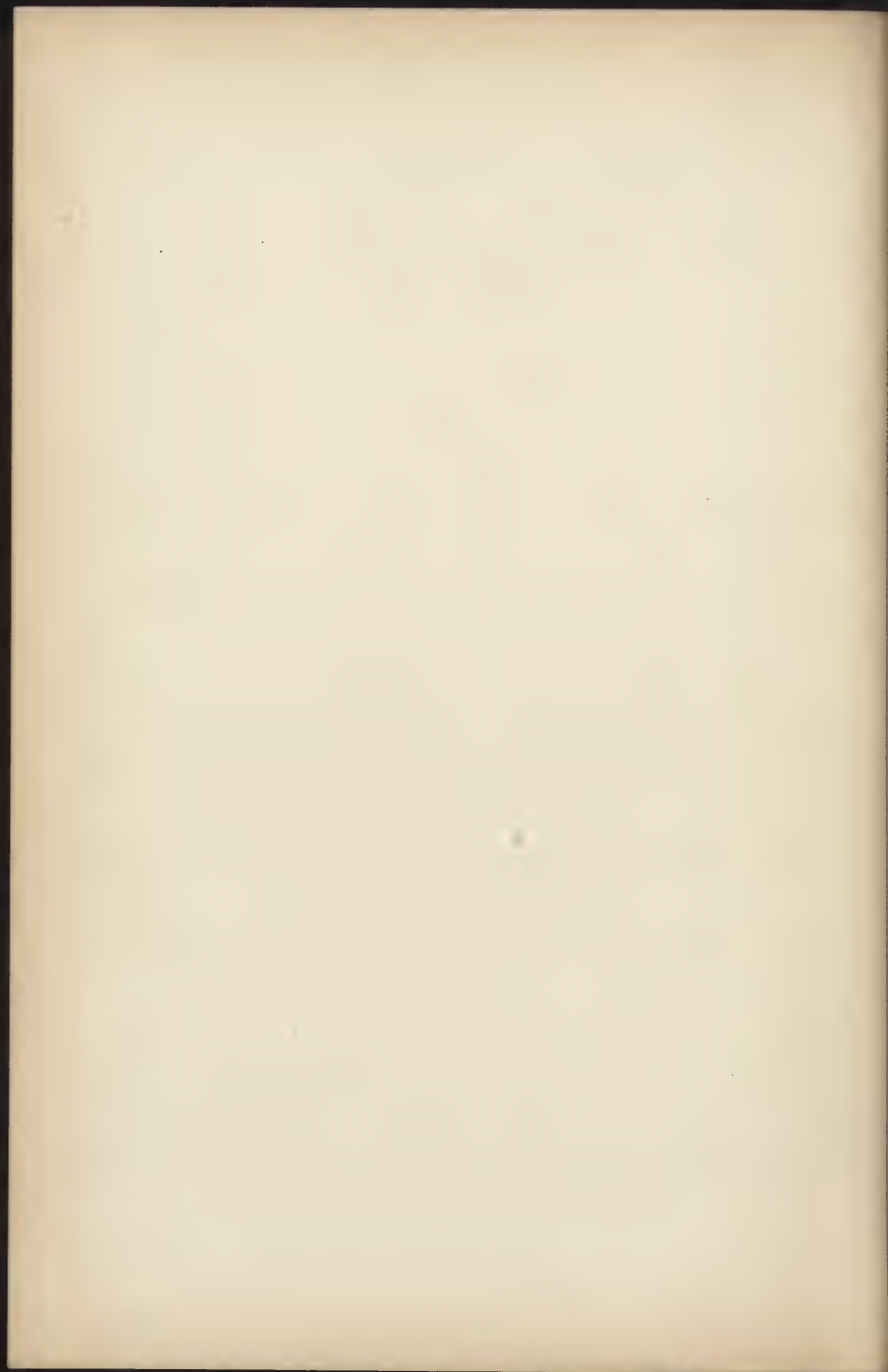
A great advance on the early works to which we have alluded is visible in the large altar-piece of the "Madonna and Saints" which Francia painted in 1490. The com-

mission was given him by a wealthy Bolognese citizen, Bartolommeo Felicini, who destined the picture for a chapel in the church of the Misericordia, a confraternity of nobles for the assistance of hospitals and other works of mercy. In this work, which Vasari calls his first, Francia represented the Virgin seated on a marble throne with six saints in the foreground, and a child-angel in a light blue robe playing the violin at her feet. The architectural background and general style of colouring are plainly the results of Costa's teaching, but side by side with these Ferrarese features we find another influence which is altogether new. This is the Umbrian tendency, which appears here in so marked a manner as to make us ask what was the link which brought Perugino into connection with the great master of Bologna. Unfortunately no historical evidence exists to satisfy our curiosity, and there is no authority for the probable supposition that Francia visited Florence, and thus became acquainted with the Umbrian painter. But there is every reason to believe that works by Perugino had by this time found their way to Bologna, and among them probably the beautiful altar-piece which he painted for the church of San Giovanni in Monte, and which now hangs in the Pinacoteca, almost side by side with Francia's Madonna of the Misericordia. It is worthy of mention that the same Umbrian character appears in a small Madonna* at Berlin, the sole remaining work of Antonio Crevalcore, a Bolognese artist chiefly known as a fruit and flower painter, between 1480 and 1500, and whose name is preserved in an epitaph by Francia's friend, Girolamo Casio. Evidently Perugino's influence had in some form or other reached Bologna, and had touched a responsive chord in Francia's

* See Crowe and Cavacaselle. "A History of Painting in North Italy," Vol. I., p. 294. Crevalcore's name, however, does not occur in the Berlin official catalogue.



THE VIRGIN ENTHRONED, WITH SAINTS. BY FRANCIA.
In the Pinacoteca, Bologna.



breast. For nowhere is this Peruginesque vein more strongly present than in the fine head of the St. Sebastian, in the Misericordia altar-piece, who is lifting his eyes to heaven with an intensity of expression to which Perugino himself has rarely attained. Henceforth this feature is constantly recurring in all Francia's panels, animating his less ideal types, his fresher and more vigorous conceptions with a tender devotional feeling, and appealing to us in the peculiar half-timid, half-reproachful gaze of those Madonnas which we know so well.

The revelation of Francia's powers as a painter was the cause of much enthusiasm among his fellow-countrymen, who were never slow to applaud the efforts of native artists, and Giovanni Bentivoglio immediately commissioned him to paint an altar-piece for his family chapel in San Giacomo Maggiore. All the religious communities of Bologna now pressed Francia to decorate their altars, and Vasari says that by the end of a few years there was scarcely a church in the city that could not boast the possession of one of his paintings. The "Annunciation" of the Brera, the "Madonna and Angels," at Munich, the Pietà, still at Bologna, in the Pinacoteca, followed each other in close succession. For his goldsmith friend, Jacopo Gambaro, who is recorded to have stood godfather with him to the child of a mutual friend, he painted the small "Holy Family," at Dudley House, and for the church of San Giobbe, in Bologna, the "Crucifixion" of the Louvre. In this singular composition the patriarch Job is represented wearing a crown and lying at the foot of the cross, pointing upwards to a scroll on which we read the words: *Maiores sustinuit ipse*. This fine and original conception is marred by a hardness of drawing and colouring, which is a sufficient proof that it was executed at an early period; its surface has suffered considerable injuries which increase this unpleasant effect.

A great step in advance is marked by the Bentivoglio altar-piece completed in 1499, and still occupying its original place in a chapel of San Giacomo Maggiore. Here the metallic harshness of the tints has given place to more harmonious tones and softer shadows, and the rich, glowing colours show that the artist had by this time acquired complete mastery of the means at his disposal. The saints are more vigorous and manly in type, and the heads are distinguished by more actual beauty than in any other of Francia's pictures. St. Sebastian is again a prominent figure, and was used as a model a century later by the Carracci, who declared it to be one of the finest studies of human form in Renaissance painting. The two angels crowned with roses and standing on the steps of the Virgin's throne are said to be portraits of children of the Bentivogli family. Others hover about the Virgin, and one, the loveliest of all, leans his head thoughtfully against a pillar and stretches out his little arms in wistful yearning to the child-Christ. In the same year Francia painted another Enthroned Madonna,* very similar to this one in style and grouping, by desire of a lady of the Manzuoli family, for the church of the Misericordia. Here the attendant saints are St. George and the Baptist, who point upwards to the child, whilst St. Stephen gazes mournfully at the stones of his martyrdom, which rest on a book that he holds before him, and another of Francia's sweet child-angels clasps a tall white lily between its folded hands, "with so much grace that it seems to belong to Paradise." [*Vasari*.]

For the same church of the Misericordia, Giovanni Bentivoglio's son, Archdeacon of Bologna and papal protonotary, ordered the "Nativity," now removed to the Gallery,† where most of Francia's masterpieces are collected. In this picture the "Nativity" is treated not as an historical event but as a Christian mystery, that is to say, the Virgin

* No. 80, in the Pinacoteca, Bologna.

† No. 81.

and attendant saints are represented in the act of adoring the new-born child, and celebrating his advent on earth. This class of composition, always a favourite with religious painters, and much used both by Perugino and Lorenzo di Credi, was especially adapted to Francia's genius. He never possessed the faculty of describing a scene in a vivid and dramatic manner, or of rendering in quick succession all the varied emotions of the human breast, but no one has excelled him in these groups of rapt saints, without a thought beyond the object of their silent adoration. And so we find him constantly moulding his subjects into this form. The Annunciation, Pietà, Assumption, and Coronation of the Virgin by turns took this shape in his hands. He conceived "these supreme events as mysteries at which the successive ages were spectators, and in relation to which the great souls of all periods became as it were contemporaries." [*George Eliot.*]

In this instance Francia has introduced several portraits among the worshippers. His masterly profile of Bartolommeo Felicini in the first Misericordia altar-piece had already proved his skill as a portrait painter, and he now represented Antonio Galeazzo Bentivoglio, who had lately returned from a pilgrimage to the Holy Land, in the mantle of a knight of the Red Cross kneeling under a ruined arch to adore the infant Christ. The youthful shepherd who stands opposite, wearing a laurel wreath on his flowing locks, is a portrait of Francia's intimate friend, the poet jeweller, Girolamo di Casio, on whom the laurel crown was bestowed by Clement VIII. This accomplished man had the greatest admiration for Francia, whose epitaph he lived to compose, and whom he addressed during his lifetime in a sonnet beginning :—

"Felice Italia che in se chiude.

Si sublime ingegno e si bella effigie

Che fanno al cielo e a natura guerra."

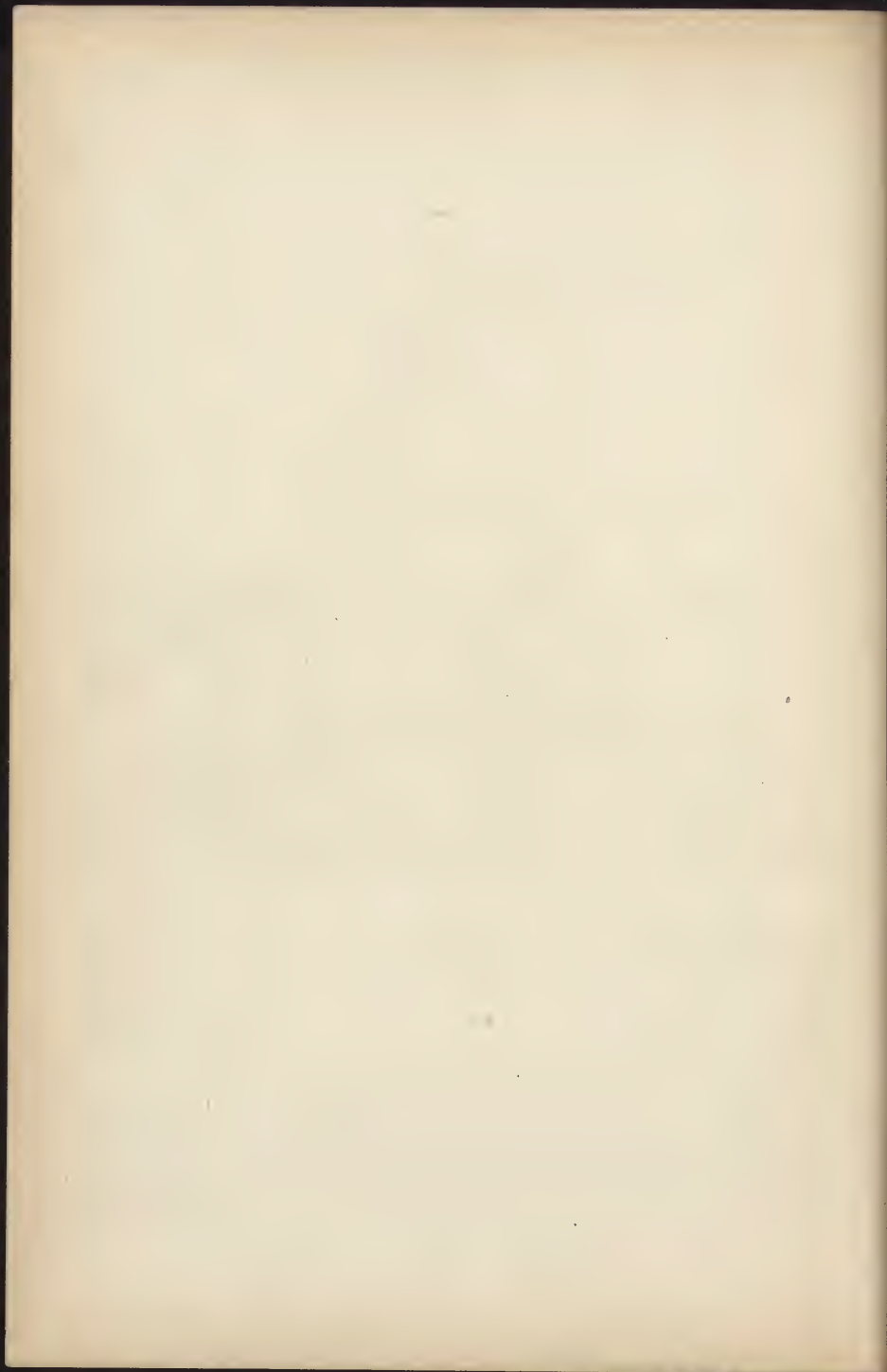
"Happy Italy, which contains a genius so lofty and forms so fair that they challenge heaven and nature."

Lastly, in the regular features of the St. Francis in the background, we have Francia's own likeness (which he has here introduced in the form of his patron saint), whose expressive face and refined air correspond exactly with contemporary descriptions. Two angels kneel in lowly adoration on either side of the child, who lifts his head and raises his tiny hand in benediction, while a bullfinch perched on a twig at his feet looks reverently towards him and almost seems to join in the act of worship. As a rule Francia's landscapes are simple in character, generally consisting of a rocky foreground and broad valley opening beyond, such as we often see in the Apennines near Bologna; sometimes in his later works they are more distinctly Umbrian, but the background of this "Nativity" is remarkable for an unusual degree of beauty and variety. The rocky steep with its solitary pine-tree is still on our right, but in the centre of the picture, above the heads of the kneeling saints, a lovely expanse of park-like scenery unfolds itself before us. There we see a broad sunny river winding its way between grassy glades and forest avenues, cattle are feeding, and human life is stirring on its banks, a church tower and cottage roofs peep out from among the trees, and far away in the distance a line of blue hills rises in soft undulating lines. The whole of this pastoral scene is charmingly conceived and painted, and forms a poetic background to one of Francia's most graceful compositions. It was for this picture that Costa painted his predella of the "Adoration of the Magi," now in the Brera, one of the many tokens of the friendship which continued to exist between the two artists.

Besides these works for the Misericordia, Francia executed several altar-pieces for other churches in Bologna—about 1500. The "Madonna and Saints," now at St. Petersburg, was originally painted for San Lorenzo, and a similar subject resembling the Bentivoglio altar-



MADONNA AND CHILD WITH A BIRD. BY FRANCIA.
In the Dresden Gallery.



piece is still to be seen in San Martino of Bologna. With these larger subjects we may mention the charming group of boy-angels playing on musical instruments round an old picture of the Madonna in San Vitale, although their Raphaelesque grace would seem to indicate a later date of production. The Franciscan church of the Annunziata, outside the gate of San Mamolo, also possessed two pictures, a "Madonna" and "Annunciation," which have been removed to the Gallery since that sanctuary has been used as a barrack by the Italian Government. Both have been much damaged, but the "Annunciation," in spite of its bad state of preservation and unpleasant rawness of colour, is singularly interesting. All three persons of the Trinity assist at the celebration of the great mystery: the Father looks down from heaven, the dove is seen descending to rest on the brows of her who was blessed among women, and a vision of the Child appears above in glory. The Angel of the Annunciation hovers in mid-air, and on earth the lowly Virgin kneels with clasped hands and bent head, her whole soul going forth in unutterable love and yearning as she listens to his message. On either side, a little below this central figure, stands a noble group of saints reverently pondering over the mystery before our eyes; and foremost among them we recognise Bernardino, the favourite saint of Bologna, whose memory was still fresh in the hearts of the people, holding an open book, on the pages of which the sacred monogram and his motto, *In Nomine Gesu*, are inscribed. The birds sing in the branches beside him, and a lizard crawls along the ground bearing a scroll, on which are the arms of the Franciscans, a skull and cross-bones, the date mcccc., and *Franciæ Aurifex pinxit*, a form of signature which the goldsmith painter retained to the end of his life.



CHAPTER III.

THE FRIENDSHIP AND INFLUENCE OF RAPHAEL, 1500—1506.

TEN or twelve years had now elapsed since Francia had devoted himself to painting, and in this comparatively short space of time he had produced many important works and obtained a wide reputation. More than this, his pictures during this period bear signs of a steady progress both in technical skill and power of expression; the old hardness and want of harmony had in a great measure disappeared, and his colouring had gained that force and richness which give him so high a place among oil-painters.

But in the first years of the sixteenth century we see him develop a new style, and paint in a manner altogether freer and grander than ever before. This marked improvement is especially visible in the composition of his pictures which, instead of depending on the expression of single heads, now acquire a grace of line and completeness that bring them near to the best Florentine works of the period.

The cause of this advance can only be ascribed to one influence—the friendship which Francia had formed with Raphael. It is evident from many of our master's works at this time that he had studied Raphael's pictures; but beyond this, both the presence of this new element and certain expressions which Raphael uses in his letter of

September, 1508, seem to imply the existence of a personal acquaintance between the two masters.

He had formed, we know, the highest opinion of Francia's merit, and gives expression in emphatic terms to his conviction that no Madonnas are so beautiful or so well calculated to inspire devotion as the creations of the Bolognese master. And on receiving Francia's portrait he declares it to be so life-like that as he stands before it he feels himself in his friend's presence and seems to hear his voice.

Everything points to more than a mere intercourse by letter, and there can be no reason to doubt the generally assumed fact that Raphael paid a visit to Bologna on his way from Florence to Urbino in 1506. But long before this they had a mutual object of interest in Timoteo Viti, a young painter of Urbino, who became one of Francia's favourite pupils and was the first link between him and Raphael.

In July, 1490, Timoteo came to Bologna to perfect himself in the goldsmith's art in Francia's workshop. The date is recorded in a register kept by Francia, where we read the following entry:—

"Timoteo Viti da Urbino was taken into our shop. He will receive no salary during the first year, and sixty-six florins for three months in the second."

In 1491 another entry records the settlement of accounts with Timoteo, and mentions that as he is desirous to become a painter he will now pass into the hall where the other artists work.

Four years later we find one more entry, which is as follows:—

"On the 4th day of April, 1495, my beloved Timoteo left us. God grant that all blessing and good fortune may be with him."

Timoteo returned to Urbino, where he became Raphael's assistant, and carried with him the fame of the master who

remembered him so kindly. Soon Francia received commissions from the Duke of Urbino, for whom he painted a Lucrezia in the act of plunging the dagger into her breast, and a marvellous set of horse trappings decorated with gaily-coloured birds and foliage.

From Timoteo's lips Raphael also heard of Francia's paintings, and was perhaps first introduced by him to those Madonnas which inspired so unfeigned an admiration in his breast. Afterwards we hear of an exchange of pictures which passed between the two great masters, and at Francia's recommendation Giovanni Bentivoglio employed Raphael to paint a "Nativity," which has unfortunately perished. The Bolognese master was of too generous and loyal a nature to entertain the least feeling of envy towards the young painter, who had already surpassed all his contemporaries, and showed his warm appreciation of Raphael's genius in the following sonnet, which he addressed to him in an outburst of enthusiasm:—

"Non son Zeusi nè Apelle, e non son tale,
Che di tanti tal nome a me convegna;
Nè mio talento, nè vertude è degna
Haver da un Raffael lodo immortale.

Tu sol, cui fece il ciel dono fatale,
Che ogn' altro excede, e sora ogn' altro regna,
L'excellente artificio à noi insegna
Con cui sei reso ad ogn' antico uguale.

Fortunato garxon, che nei primi anni
Tant' oltre passi; e che sarà poi quando
In più provecta etade opre migliori?

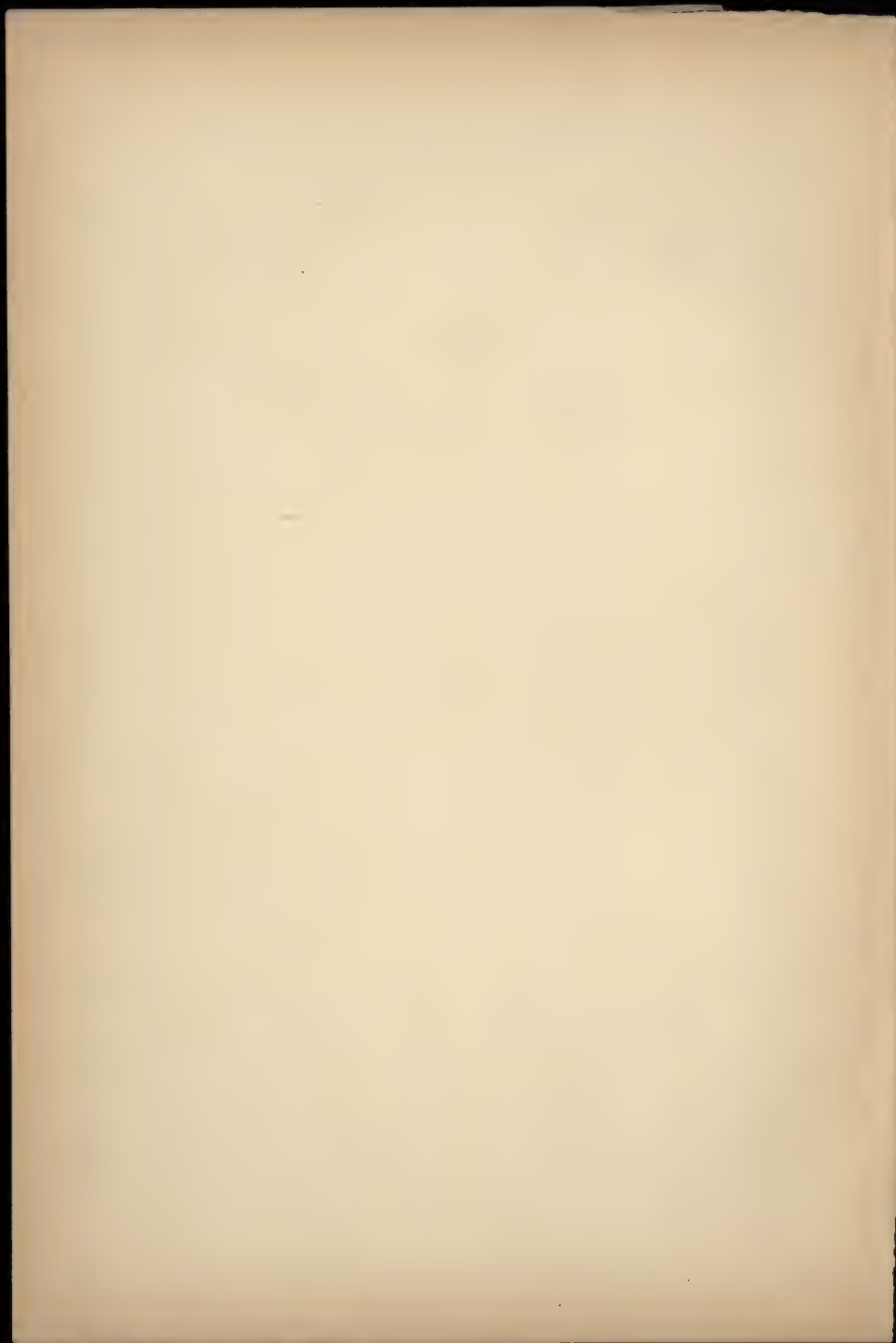
Vinta sarà natura; e, da' tuoi inganni
Resa eloquente, dirà, te lodando,
Che tu solo il pictor sei de' pictori."

"I am not Zeuxis nor Apelles, neither do I deserve that fame so great shall be mine, nor is my talent worthy to receive immortal praise from a Raffael.



DEPOSITION FROM THE CROSS. BY FRANCA.

In the Accademia, Parma.



"Thou alone, on whom heaven has bestowed the fatal gift that thou shouldest excel all others and reign over all, teachest us the admirable art by which thou art become equal to the ancients.

"Fortunate boy, who in thy earliest years hast already advanced so far, what wilt thou not be when in maturer age thou shalt achieve yet greater things? Then nature shall own herself conquered, and rendered eloquent by thy charms, shall exclaim in thy praise, that thou alone art the painter of painters."

The original manuscript of this sonnet was first published by the historian Malvasia, who discovered it among the papers of a member of the Lambertini family, and gave the accompanying inscription, which proves Francia to have been its author. *All' eccellente pittore Raffaello Sanzio, Zeusi del nostro secolo. Di me Francesco Raibolini docto il Francia.* Even without these convincing proofs of Raphael's friendship with Francia, it would have been difficult not to assume the existence of some similar connection from the strong marks of the great painter's influence that meet us in Francia's later works.

In the "Deposition," painted soon after 1500 for the Benedictines of Parma, his style is already powerfully affected by this contact with Raphael, which can alone account for a vigorous action and dramatic character here displayed. A deep emotion is visible on the faces of the St. John, who supports the head, the Magdalen, who embraces the feet, and the Virgin, who gazes at the dead face of her son with the grief-stricken look which the "Pietà" of the National Gallery has stamped upon our minds. Salome, who stands behind, flings aloft her arms in an energy of despair unlike anything else that Francia ever conceived, while in the background the cross lifts its gaunt form against the glowing tints of an evening sky and a soft distance of cypress-grown rocks and far-away hills.

Not many years afterwards Francia was asked by a



THE VIRGIN AND TWO ANGELS WEEPING OVER THE DEAD BODY OF CHRIST.
A PIETA. BY FRANCIA.
In the National Gallery.

opening beyond, all the great future that was to grow out of the suffering and death which she mourned.

“The wave
Of love which set so deep and strong
By Christ’s yet open grave.”

[*Matthew Arnold.*]

Unlike Mantegna and Gian Bellini, Francia has not attempted to give any impression of the physical agony which has passed over the corpse, but has concentrated all his force in the endeavour to give the deep repose and peace of death without sacrificing anything of majesty of form. There are other points in the drawing which might be criticised, and a degree of stiffness in the position of the right arm has been often observed, but no minor defects can prevent Francia’s *Pietà* from being, in refinement of conception and tenderness of feeling, the highest ideal representation of the subject in the whole range of art.

The other portion of this altar-piece, a Virgin enthroned with the Child, St. Anna at her side between two arches, and the Saints Sebastian, Paul, Lawrence and Romualdo below, hangs next to Perugino’s *Certosa* altar-piece in the National Gallery. An excellent opportunity is thus afforded of comparing the styles of the two painters, and Francia’s work does not show to disadvantage even by the side of Perugino’s masterpiece. In depth and richness of colour he is at least his equal, and although his types are less ideal they are fresher and more natural, and there is less affectation in the attitude of his figures.

For the same church of San Frediano at Lucca, Francia painted another large altar-piece the “Coronation of the Virgin,” which is still to be seen there. Here again he gives the subject a mystical character and introduces the patriarchal ancestors of Mary and the chief advocates of the dogma of the Immaculate Conception among the

figures who stand below in devout contemplation. Each bears a scroll in his hand: David points to a verse of Psalm xxvii, "*In the secret of his tabernacle shall he hide me;*" Solomon, a noble, kingly profile, gazes earnestly upwards, showing us a text from his song, "*Thou art all fair, my love;*" while Anselm and Augustine bear scrolls on which we read passages from their own writings relating to the Virgin, and Antony of Padua kneels at the empty tomb where lilies and roses have blossomed. This altar-piece, although less known than Francia's other masterpieces, yields to none of his works in grandeur and finish. The kneeling Madonna who, robed in purple and gold, receives her crown from the hands of the Eternal, retains the same expression of sweet humility touched with sadness which marks all his Virgins, and the scenes from the History of the Augustinian order on the predella are painted with exquisite taste and delicacy.

Another large Coronation, commonly called the altar-piece of All the Saints from the multitude of figures grouped below, is still in the Duomo of Ferrara; while Cesena retains the "Presentation" mentioned by Vasari, although the beauty of colouring to which he alludes has lost much of its freshness.

A "Nativity," painted for his intimate friend Paolo Zambeccaro at Bologna, is now in the Picture Gallery of Forli, but the frescoes with which he adorned Zambeccaro's villa have all perished. The same fate has been shared by the other frescoes which he painted in different palaces of Bologna, and what is most of all to be regretted, the "Judith" and "Dispute of Philosophers" which he executed for Giovanni Bentivoglio were destroyed in the sack of the tyrant's palace by the mob, on his expulsion in 1507. Vasari, speaking from the testimony of eye-witnesses, declares the Judith to have been the finest work which Francia ever painted, and describes minutely

the splendour of the surroundings introduced, the horses, banners, and armed guards brought on the scene as belonging to the camp of Holofernes. The fame of this fresco had also reached the ears of Raphael, who begged for a sketch of the work, but unfortunately not even a drawing remains to give us an idea of the manner in which Francia treated a theme so unlike his usual objects.

A "Lucrezia" by his hand, perhaps the very panel which he painted for Guido Baldo, Duke of Urbino, is now in England,* but has nothing classical in character. The Roman matron raising her eyes to heaven as she plunges the dagger into her breast is in feature and expression the exact counterpart of Francia's saints, and but for the uplifted hand might be a St. Catharine or St. Agnes with perfect propriety. On the other hand drawings in the style of ancient bas-reliefs by Francia, which in type and character admit no doubt as to their genuineness, meet us occasionally both in foreign galleries and in London exhibitions, and show a much truer appreciation of classical art. Such are the "Judgment of Paris" in the Albertina collection, Vienna, and that beautiful group of Greek youths before an altar exhibited by Mr. J. C. Robinson in the Grosvenor Gallery of 1879, in which the grace of antique art is delicately blended with the yearning expression of Christian devotion. These and others that resemble them were designs for engravings probably intended for the use of Marc Antonio Raimondi, who served his first apprenticeship in Francia's workshop, and engraved several of his master's pictures before he left for Venice in 1509.

More than one of this celebrated artist's engravings bear marks of this early training in the school of Francia, an influence soon to be effaced by the very different associations and examples of the Roman world, in the midst of which his later years were spent.

* At Tew Park, Oxfordshire.



CHAPTER IV.

THE FRESCOES OF ST. CECILIA'S CHAPEL, 1506—1509.

THE only series of frescoes painted by Francia in Bologna of which some traces still remain, are those in the Oratory of St. Cecilia, attached to the church of San Giacomo Maggiore. This chapel, founded by Giovanni Bentivoglio and erected by the architect Gasparo Nadi in 1481, was decorated entirely by the hands of Francia and his scholars in the early part of the sixteenth century. Costa's fresco, which alone bears a date, was executed in 1506, and the whole series was probably completed before the exile of the Bentivogli in 1507.

Unfortunately this chapel, which is for the Bolognese school what the chapels of the Carmine and Eremitani are for Florentine and Paduan art, has been frequently turned to other uses, and during its occupation by French soldiers the frescoes suffered great injury. All are much damaged, and some mutilated in such a manner that the principal figures are scarcely visible. But even in their present melancholy condition Francia's frescoes are full of interest, and it is easy to see how superior they are in merit to any other works of the school. Of the four remaining artists employed in the chapel—Lorenzo Costa, Giovanni Chiodarolo, Amico Aspertini, and Giacomo Raibolini (or Tamaroccio)—the Ferrarese master is the only one who

approaches him in the excellence of his style, and even Costa's heads cannot compare with those of Francia for beauty and expression. The subjects of the ten frescoes are all taken from the history of St. Cecilia.

On the right of the altar:—

1. Marriage of Cecilia and Valerian. *Francia.*
2. Valerian instructed in the Christian faith by Pope Urban. *Costa.*
3. Baptism of Valerian. *Cesare Tamaroccio.**
4. Valerian and Cecilia crowned with roses by an Angel. *Chiodarolo.*
5. Martyrdom of Valerian and his brother Tiburtius. *Aspertini.*

On the left of the altar:—

6. The Burial of the Brothers. *Aspertini.*
7. Cecilia before the Prefect. *Aspertini.*
8. Cecilia condemned to the boiling bath. *Cesare Tamaroccio.**
9. Cecilia distributing her riches to the poor. *Costa.*
10. Burial of Cecilia. *Francia.*

The two frescoes by Francia are placed nearest to the altar, exactly opposite each other, and are on the whole the best-preserved of the series. Here Raphael's influence is more apparent than in any of Francia's works, and it is highly probable that he visited Bologna while the chapel was being painted. The fresco of the Marriage at once recalls Raphael's "Sposalizio" in the grouping of the figures, and is remarkable for its grace of composition. The officiating priest stands between the bride and bridegroom under the portal of a chapel which opens on to a wooded valley. The bride shrinks timidly back and turns her face away as one of her maidens holds her hand on

* These two frescoes are usually ascribed to Giacomo Raibolini; but Frizzoni and Milanese after him attribute them to Tamaroccio, who assisted his master Francia in the chapel.

which Valerian places the ring. On either side are groups of youths and maidens who, by their intent gaze and animated gesture, show their interest in the marriage that is being celebrated. The action is simple, the heads noble and refined; those of the maidens are especially remarkable for their beauty, while the grace of line that marks the grouping is happily continued in the landscape beyond, which harmonizes well with the scene before us. Evidently the subject was exactly suited to Francia's genius, and he has succeeded admirably.

The same praise can scarcely be given as fully to the "Burial of St. Cecilia," wonderful as is the power of its simple pathos. There is a want of dramatic action in the spectators, and at the same time a formality in the arrangement of the groups on either side of the picture, which gives the whole an air of stiffness and renders it inferior in point of composition to the Marriage. But these defects are atoned for by the beauty of the central portion, where four young men hold the lifeless form of the martyred saint suspended in a winding-sheet above the opening of the vault. A wreath of white roses crowns her gentle brows, and the bystanders press forward to take a last look at the sleeping face that is still so fair in death. As in the Christ of the Pietà all trace of suffering has passed away, the hands are folded with exquisite tenderness, and the sweet maiden seems to lie there wrapt once more in the deep unconscious sleep of childhood. For a moment we wonder if this happy slumber can be death, but—if we look a little further, beyond the pale light just breaking into the valley, above the tall cliffs and the topmost branches of the waving palm-trees—we shall see the dim form of an angel who wings his flight upwards, bearing the soul of the martyr back to God.

The frescoes of St. Cecilia were the last works which Francia painted for his patron Giovanni Bentivoglio. In

1507, perhaps even before the chapel was completed, the Bentivogli were driven out of Bologna by a popular rising and forced to flee for their lives. Not only did Francia lose their patronage and friendship, but he had the grief of seeing some of his best works destroyed by an infuriated mob in the sack of their palace in the Strada Donato.

The universal respect in which he was held by his countrymen saved him from sharing in the ruin of his patrons, and he retained his office at the head of the Mint under Pope Julius II. In this capacity he was required to coin the money which the Pope threw to the populace on his triumphal entry and which bore the inscription :—"Bononia per Julium a tyranno liberata." But although he was forced to lend his talents, as Michelangelo did on another occasion, to the service of the victor, he could not conceal the bitterness of his grief, and for a whole year after the flight of the Bentivogli still lamented the loss he had suffered.

It was then that Raphael addressed his well-known letter to Francia, begging him to take heart, and assuring him of his sympathy. The two painters had, it appears, agreed to exchange portraits, and in this letter Raphael thanks Francia for having sent him his likeness painted by his own hand. We give a translation of this interesting document, which was first discovered with Francia's sonnet in the papers of the Lambertini family, and brought to light by Malvasia :—

"My dear Messer Francesco,—

"I have this moment received your portrait, which Bazotto brought me safely, without injury of any kind, and for which I thank you exceedingly. It is very beautiful, and so life-like that at times it deceives me. I seem to be with you and to hear your voice. I pray you, pardon my delays, which arise from the tasks in which I am incessantly engaged, and which have been the cause why I have not yet painted the portrait with my own hand, according

to our agreement. Nor would I allow it to be painted by one of my pupils and retouched by myself, since this would not have been seemly, although I have no hope of ever equalling your work. Have compassion on me, I say, since you know by experience what it is to be deprived of liberty and bound to patrons. I am sending you by this same messenger, who returns in six days, another drawing, that of 'The Nativity,' somewhat different from the original, which you were good enough to praise so highly, with the same kindness with which you speak of my other works in a manner that causes me to blush. I hope that you will accept this trifle, more as a token of love and obedience than for any other reason, and if in exchange I may receive a drawing of your 'History of Judith' I will place it among my dearest and most precious treasures. Monsignore il Datario awaits his 'Madonella' with much impatience, and Cardinal Riario his large one, all of which you will hear more particularly from the said Bazotto. I, for my part, shall behold them with the same delight and satisfaction with which I see and praise all your other works, never having seen any images that are fairer or more devout and well painted. In the meantime take courage, summon up all your habitual wisdom, and be sure that I feel your afflictions as keenly as if they were my own. Continue to love me as I love you, with my whole heart.

"Ever your most obliged and devoted,

"RAFAELLE SANZIO.

"Roma, the fifth day of September, 1508."

Few documents in art history are more interesting than this letter, which breathes all the sunny gladness of Raphael's nature, and proves how sincerely he admired Francia as an artist and felt for him as a friend.

It is uncertain whether the portrait which he praises so warmly still exists, but at the end of last century a half-

length figure of Francia holding a diamond ring, by his own hand, was in the Boschi collection at Bologna, and a few years ago a similar work belonged to a private gallery at Turin.*

As a portrait-painter Francia ranks high, and all the works of this class by him which remain are marked by the same exquisite finish and life-like fidelity. The Tribune of the Uffizi has a fine specimen in the head of Evangelista Scappi, whose pleasant open face and bushy locks modern copyists have rendered familiar. The Umbrian character of the landscape and general style of the work resemble Perugino's heads, while other of Francia's portraits are painted more in his Raphaelesque manner.

Such is the noble portrait of the Liechtenstein Gallery at Vienna long ascribed to Raphael, but rightfully restored to Francia by Crowe and Cavalcaselle, and probably the likeness of some Bolognese noble, since it originally belonged to an old family of that city.

The poet Girolamo di Casio also alludes in one of his sonnets to two female portraits by Francia remarkable for their beauty, but these have perished, it is to be feared, since no portraits of women by his hand are known to exist.

The expulsion of the Bentivogli, although a severe shock to Francia, does not appear to have diminished his powers of activity, and many of his best works belong to the years immediately following this event, which he deplored so deeply. In 1509 he painted the "Baptism of Christ," now at Dresden, which still retains its rich glow of colour in spite of injuries received from the splinters of a shell during the bombardment of that city in 1760. Christ is repre-

* The picture exhibited by Sir William Abdy at Burlington House last winter (1881) as the painter's own likeness has too little in common with Francia's style to be accepted as genuine with any certainty, although a print of it, bearing the date 1763 and the name of the goldsmith painter, is said to exist.

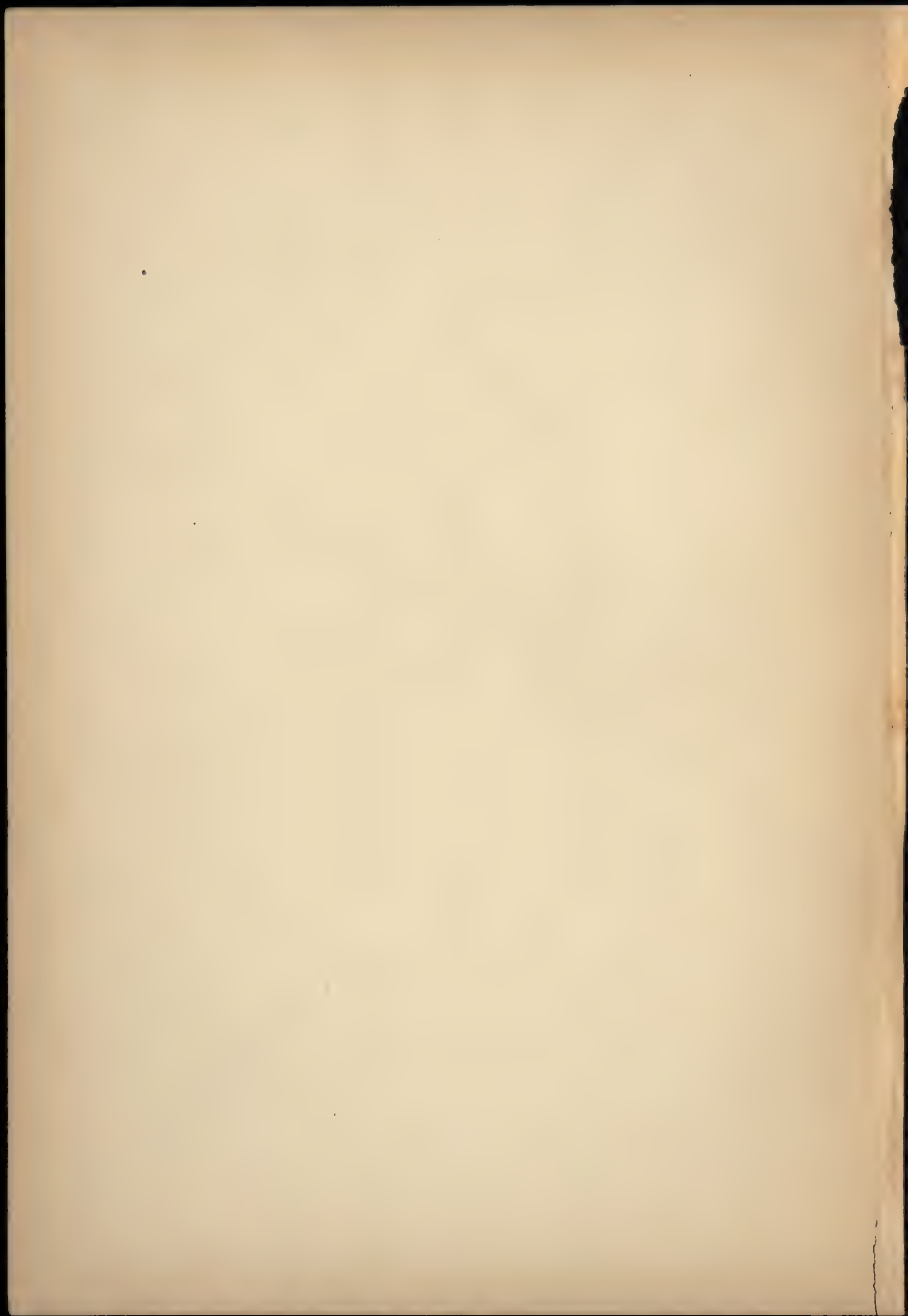
sented standing on the waters of Jordan while the Baptist bends forward from one of the banks, and two angels with wistful faces wait on the other. A good replica of the subject, with the same hilly landscape but some variations, is at Hampton Court, and originally belonged to the Mantuan collection purchased by Charles I. The Dresden Gallery possesses two other fine works of Francia, an "Adoration of the Magi," with a lake and mountain background, which bears strong marks of Raphael's influence, and a "Madonna" from the Quandt collection. This last is one of the half-length figures of the Virgin with the child, and one or more attendant saints, which became so popular a subject in Francia's school, and of which so many repetitions are to be seen. The example in the National Gallery, acquired from the Beaucousin collection, has unfortunately lost much of its original clearness, owing to the wash of burnt sienna which has been laid on the surface.

Another finely conceived work, which has been ruined by repainting, is the "Madonna and Saints" of the Belvedere at Vienna, while the same fate has attended the Berlin altar-piece, originally painted for the Friars of the Osservanza at Modena.

Two other panels, which, in type and execution, bear a marked resemblance to the frescoes of St. Cecilia's chapel, and were evidently painted soon afterwards, are in a better state of preservation. The first, an "Annunciation," with St. Jerome and the Baptist, in the Bologna Gallery, is a picture of the same class as the earlier Annunziata altar-piece, and is distinguished by the refinement and gentleness of the Virgin's face. The other is the beautiful "Madonna of the Rose Garden," originally painted for the Gonzagas, into whose service Francia's old friend, Lorenzo Costa, had passed after the exile of the Bentivogli. It remained in the Mantua collection till 1786, and after experiencing many changes of hands, became the property of the Em-



THE MADONNA OF THE ROSE-GARDEN. BY FRANCA.
In the Pinakothek, Munich.



press Josephine, until in 1815 it passed from Malmaison into the Pinakothek of Munich. The child lies on a bed of flowery grass, stretching out its little arms with a smile of delight to its mother, who is in the act of sinking upon her knees in a rapture of loving adoration. A trellis of tall roses, which might have been painted by a Botticelli or Filippino, fences the garden round, and, in the pleasant meadows beyond, horses are feeding on the banks of a winding stream, and church-towers rise in the distance. Nowhere is the transparent delicacy of Francia's colouring more pleasing than in the silver-grey tones of the Virgin's robe, while her countenance wears the same gentle air of tender melancholy which haunts his conceptions in the same way as the smile on Leonardo's faces, and the deeper sadness of Botticelli's Madonnas.





CHAPTER V.

LAST WORKS AND DEATH, A.D. 1509—1517.

WE have few details of the last years of Francia's life, but the dates that mark some of his pictures show us that his powers were not impaired, nor his activity diminished with advancing age.

It would be interesting to know how he was affected by the return of his friends, the Bentivogli, who in 1511 entered Bologna again, on the retreat of the Papal troops before the French army under Gaston de Foix. The fickle Bolognese were as glad to be rid of the Pope as they had ever been to expel their former tyrant, and destroyed the statue which Julius II. had erected of himself on the principal square. But the Bentivogli only enjoyed their return to power during a very brief space. In a few months the conquering advance of the French army was checked by the death of Gaston de Foix in the battle of Ravenna; the Pope's troops again entered Bologna, the Bentivogli fled once more, and the city was heavily fined and deprived of many of its former privileges.

All we hear of Francia in these stormy times is that in 1511 he was elected one of the sixteen Gonfalonieri of the people, which proves that he still retained the popular favour, and that his changeable fellow-countrymen had not wavered in their affection and regard for him. In

1512 he was once more elected master of the Goldsmiths' Guild, and in 1514 he attained the dignity of Master of the four arts. "He was revered as a god in Bologna," says Vasari, "and not even his friendship for Raphael, and his desire to see the larger works of the great painter, could tear him away from his native city."

The fame of his works had spread over all Italy and had attracted a large number of scholars, as many, it is said, as two hundred. Several of the best of these passed into the school of Raphael, as Timoteo Viti had already done, and adopted a style which has little in common with that of Francia. Such were Innocenza da Imola and Bartolommeo Ramenghi, of Bagnacavallo, whose influence became prominent in the Bolognese school after Francia's death, and who have left many of their works in the churches and Gallery of Bologna.

Others followed more closely in Francia's steps, and contented themselves for the most part with weak and conventional repetitions of those Saints and Madonnas which his genius had rendered popular. Chief among these was Francia's own son, Giacomo Raibolini, an active and careful artist who never aspired to originality, and whose conceptions are generally wanting in life and freedom. Three of his best panels are in the Berlin Museum, and we often find them in other collections under his father's name.

There is a fine portrait of him in the Pitti Palace, Florence, and as an engraver he rose to the first rank, some of his prints being equal in delicacy and finish to those of Marc Antonio himself.

Francia's second son, Giulio by name, also became a painter, and was associated with Giacomo in the execution of several panels, which are distinguished by the signature J. J. Francia. Giacomo died in 1557; Giulio at some time after 1543.

Another of Francia's assistants whom he employed, as he

did Giacomo, in the frescoes of Cecilia, was Amico Aspertini, a wayward and eccentric artist, who travelled in many parts of Italy, and received the surname "dai due pennelle," from his habit of working with both hands, holding one brush for dark, and the other for pale tints. His numerous paintings in Bologna have mostly perished, and the best works by him which remain are the frescoes of the Volto Santo in San Frediano at Lucca, painted by him about the same time that Francia executed his two altar-pieces for that church.

Besides these, Francia's influence left its mark on several of the Ferrarese, especially on Costa's pupil, Ercole Grandi II., and on the Ravenna artists, one of whom, Girolamo Marchesi da Cotignola, painted several works at Bologna, and was summoned to take the portrait of Gaston de Foix as he lay dead on the battle-field.

Thus the latter part of Francia's life was partly spent in directing the efforts of this large number of scholars, all engaged in the production of the numerous works in his style, and often bearing his name, which are scattered throughout Europe. A few genuine panels of his last years are still, however, to be seen. A Madonna dated 1511 is in Casa Pertusati at Milan, and a small God the Father in the Ercolani collection at Bologna bears Francia's signature and the date 1514. Two larger and more important works belong to the following year, 1515. One of these is the "Madonna and Saints" in the Gallery of Parma, formerly in the possession of the Sanvitale family, and resembling his earlier creations in most points; it is remarkable for the fine profile of St. Justina, who kneels on the pedestal of the Virgin's throne, looking upward with ardent devotion. The other is the Pietà of the Turin Gallery, a work which has lost the richness of its colouring from subsequent restoration, but still retains much of its former excellence. The leading features are the same as those of the larger Parma "Deposition." The

dead Christ lies in the Virgin's arms supported by the Magdalen and St. John. Behind them Nicodemus raises his hands with a sorrowing gesture, and a monk stands with a lily in his hand, while tall palm-trees in the background spread their fan-like branches against the western skies. There is the same majesty of repose in the dead Christ, the same expression of piteous sorrow on the Virgin's face, which we expect in a *Pietà* by Francia. It was the old conception of earlier days, which had lost none of its force in declining years, but was still present as vividly as ever to his mind.

The following year is rendered memorable by a last communication which took place between Raphael and Francia. The great painter had finished his famous altar-piece of St. Cecilia for the chapel, which a noble Bolognese lady, the Beata Elena Duglioli, had erected in the church of San Giovanni del Monte, and wrote to Francia, begging him as a friend whom he trusted implicitly, to repair any accident the picture might have suffered on the journey, and to make any correction which might appear to him advisable. The picture reached Bologna safely early in the year 1516. Francia, in accordance with his friend's directions, placed it above the altar in the chapel for which it was destined. The Bolognese hailed the appearance of Raphael's masterpiece with enthusiastic acclamations, and we may well believe that Francia shared in their delight with the same generous appreciation which he had always shown for his friend's genius. On the strength of these simple facts, the voice of slander founded the ridiculous story, which Vasari repeats, of Francia having died from the transport of jealous rage with which he was filled at the sight of Raphael's masterpiece. The absurdity of the fabrication is evident when we remember the pictures which had been exchanged and the letters which had passed between the two masters, and is contrary to all we

know of Francia's character and natural disposition. Vasari himself seems to have felt some misgivings as to the truth of the story, for he proceeds to qualify his statement with the words "*come alcuni credono*" (as some believe), and adds that others say Francia died of poison.

Malvasia, in his zeal to vindicate the memory of Francia, endeavours to prove that the Bolognese master lived till 1522, but the real date of his death has been finally proved by the discovery of three separate notices in contemporary chronicles, which all record the fact that Francesco Francia, that most excellent goldsmith and painter, died on the 5th of January, 1517 (new style 1518). The illness which ended his life, and the grave where he lies, are both unknown, but it seems probable that he was buried in the cloister of the large church of San Francesco, a favourite place of sepulchre in his days, and which contains the tomb of his son Giacomo.

During the next thirty years his pupils continued to paint in Bologna, and maintained in some measure the honour of his name, but before the end of the century a new school, utterly different in aim and style, sprang up, and—in the sudden blaze of fame which encircled the names of the Carracci, Domenichino, and Guido—the works of the older masters were forgotten. Travellers who visited Bologna in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries were attracted solely by the creations of the Eclectic school, and returned home without being even aware of Francia's existence. M. Rio points out a striking proof of the neglect into which his works had fallen, in the curious fact that among all the pictures which the French invaders carried back to Paris not a single piece was by Francia.

With the revival of a better taste the great master of the old school of Bologna soon received just recognition, and his purity and gentleness will always appeal to a large

class of sympathetic natures who are attracted by the charm of an art which is apparent to all.

If we consider the place which he holds in contemporary art we shall see how little he had in common with the spirit of his age, and how much of his aspirations and sympathies belonged to the old world of the earlier religious painters. Living as he did in the days of Raphael, at a moment when the Renaissance was fast hastening to its culminating point, Francia took no share in the great movement that was swaying forward at every point, but stood apart in a sphere of his own. In an age when revived Paganism had penetrated into every part of society, and the love of the antique was the ruling impulse of intellectual thought, he scarcely shows a trace of this influence, and derives his inspiration exclusively from Christian sources. He paints Lucrezia dying with the ecstatic smile of a martyred saint on her lips, and designs classical figures only to give them the yearning expression of religious emotion.

But in this realm of mystic art it must be owned that he takes the highest place. That fine saying of Raphael, when he declared that no other Madonnas were as beautiful or as religious as those which Francia painted, was no empty compliment. Since those days many have felt the truth of his words, and have confirmed his judgment. For to the earnestness and purity of Fra Angelico's conceptions Francia brought a mastery of resources which had been lacking to those older painters. His creations are animated with a warmer humanity and a more vigorous life, they have all the charm of glowing colours and strongly contrasted light and shadow, while secular influences are allowed a larger part in the rich ornament and noble architecture which surround them.

Thus Francia shares with Perugino the praise of having combined the technical perfection of a later age with the

Christian motives which had so largely influenced the first efforts of Italian art. But, unlike Perugino, the religious feeling which formed the secret of Francia's inspiration remained fresh and strong within his breast to the end of his life, and was with him still a real and living power, when it had sunk into conventionalism and affectation in the later works of the Umbrian master, and was rapidly yielding to the growing influences of a worldly age in the creations of Raphael.

Slowly but surely men's thoughts and their ideals of life had undergone a complete change, and the art of Italy was entering on a new phase in which there was no longer room for the rapture of Fra Angelico's faces, or the sweet gentleness of the Madonnas who haunted Francia's dreams.

"The old order changeth, yielding place to new,
And God fulfils himself in many ways."





THE PRINCIPAL WORKS OF MANTEGNA.

BERGAMO. *Lochis-Carrara Gallery.*

Madonna and Child.

Portrait of man in red dress (Francesco Gonzaga?).

BERLIN. *Museum.*

Portrait of an Ecclesiastic. (Matteo Bosso, Abbot of Fiesole.)

Madonna and Child. (*Painted about 1464.*)

Presentation in the Temple. (*Painted about 1464.*)

COPENHAGEN. *Museum.*

Man of Sorrow supported by Angels. (ANDREAS MANTINEA.
Painted about 1489.)

DRESDEN. *Gallery.*

Holy Family (*formerly in the possession of Sir Charles Eastlake.*)

FLORENCE. *Uffizi.*

Madonna and Child, in a rocky landscape. (*Painted in 1488—90.*)

Adoration of the Magi; Presentation; and Ascension. (*A triptych, painted about 1464.*)

FRANKFORT. *Stadel.*

St. Mark (*doubtful.*)

GLASGOW. *Hamilton Collection.*Woman carrying a basin. (*Painted about 1470.*)Woman drinking. (*Painted about 1470.*)

HAMPTON COURT.

The Triumphs of Julius Cæsar, 1492. (*Nine cartoons.*)LA MOTTA. *Scarpa Collection.*

St. Sebastian.

LONDON. *National Gallery.*The Virgin and Child enthroned; St. John the Baptist and the Magdalen. *With the annexed signature (C.P.F. = Civis Patavinus fecit.)*

Andrea Mantegna C.P.F.

The Triumph of Scipio (*in monochrome: painted in 1505*).MADRID. *Museum.*Death of the Virgin (*formerly in the collection of Charles I.; painted about 1470*).MANTUA. *Castello [frescoes in the Camera degli Sposi, 1470—74].*Lodovico Gonzaga and Barbara of Brandenburg surrounded by their family and Court (*on the walls*).Lodovico meeting his son, Cardinal Francesco, on his return from Rome (*on the walls*).Scenes from the fables of Hercules, Orpheus, Apollo, &c.; Medallions of Cæsars, Cupids, and other figures (*in monochrome, on the ceiling*).MILAN. *Brera.*St. Luke and other saints (*altar-piece in twelve parts: painted for Santa Giustina, Padua, in 1454*).

The dead Christ bewailed by the Maries.

Casa Trivulzi.

Virgin and Child in glory, with SS. John the Baptist, Romualdo, and Jerome, a bishop and three angels. A

MANTINIA P. AN. GRACIE, 1497, 15 AUGUSTI.

MUNICH. *Pinakothek.*

Madonna enthroned with Saints.

NAPLES. *Museum.*

St. Euphemia, OPUS ANDREÆ MANTEGNÆ, MCCCCLIII.

PADUA. *Church of the Eremitani.*

St. James baptizing Hermogenes.

St. James before Herod.

St. James blessing a convert on his way to execution.

Martyrdom of St. James.

Martyrdom of St. Christopher.

Burial of St. Christopher. *Six frescoes, 1453—1459.*

Basilica of Sant' Antonio.

St. Bernardino and St. Anthony, 1452 (*fresco in a lunette over the portal*).

PARIS. *Louvre.*

The Crucifixion (*part of the predella of the altar-piece of San Zeno in Verona*).

Madonna della Vittoria (*painted in 1495—96 for Santa Maria della Vittoria, Mantua*).

Parnassus.

Wisdom victorious over the Vices (*from Isabella Gonzaga's "Grotto"*).

PARMA. *Pinacoteca.*

Copies in oil of the frescoes in the church of the Eremitani at Padua (*doubtful*).

TOURS. *Museum.*

Christ on the Mount of Olives (*part of the predella of the altar-piece of San Zeno in Verona*).

The Ascension (*part of the predella of the altar-piece of San Zeno in Verona*).

TURIN. *Gallery.*

Madonna and five saints.

VENICE. *Academy.*

St. George. (*Painted about 1464*).

VERONA. *San Zeno.*

Madonna and eight Saints. (*Painted about 1459; altar-piece: the predella, a copy of which is in San Zeno, is part in the Louvre and part in the Tours Museum.*)

VIENNA. *Belvedere.*

St. Sebastian. (*Painted about 1464*).

Studies for the Triumphs of Julius Cæsar (*doubtful*).

PAINTINGS BY MANTEGNA IN PRIVATE COLLECTIONS IN ENGLAND EXHIBITED AT VARIOUS TIMES.*

AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTION (1816—1852).

Date.	Subject.	Owner.
1835.	Triumph of Scipio	George Vivian, Esq.
1861.	The Children of Medea rescued by the Nurse	J. C. Robinson, Esq.

AT THE MANCHESTER ART TREASURES EXHIBITION, 1857.

Cat. No.	Subject.	Owner.
91.	Pietà, with the Crucifixion in the Distance	Liverpool Royal Institution.
96.	Judith	Earl of Pembroke.
97.	Christ bearing the Cross . .	Christ Church, Oxford.
98.	Christ on the Mount of Olives .	Thomas Baring, Esq.
102.	The Triumph of Scipio . . .	George Vivian, Esq.

AT THE LEEDS ART TREASURES EXHIBITION, 1868.

Cat. No.	Subject.	Owner.
54.	Saint	Colonel Markham.
55.	A Triumphal Procession . . .	H. D. Owen, Esq.
57.	Judith with the Head of Holofernes .	Colonel Markham.
59.	Virgin and Child, surrounded by scenes in the Life of the Virgin . .	J. W. Faulkner, Esq.

AT THE "EXHIBITION OF THE WORKS OF THE OLD MASTERS."

Date.	Subject.	Owner.
1870.	Virgin and Child and St. John with SS. Joachim and Anna . . .	Lady Eastlake.
	Christ on the Mount of Olives . .	Thomas Baring, Esq., M.P.
	Angel at the Tomb	Lady Taunton.

* In the lists of Mantegna's and Francia's works exhibited at the British Institution, Manchester, Leeds, and the "Old Masters" at Burlington House, the official catalogues have been strictly adhered to; it must not be supposed that every picture classed as the work of Mantegna or of Francia is recognised as genuine by the critics; for example, the Royal Academy merely catalogues the works "under the names given to them by the contributors," and "can accept no responsibility as to their authenticity."

Date.	Subject.	Owner.
1871.	The Triumph of Scipio . . .	George Vivian, Esq.
	The Wise Men's Offerings . . .	Louisa, Lady Ashburton.
	Subjects (four) from the Life of Christ	Earl of Dudley.
1872.	Two Figures; a Study . . .	Duke of Buccleuch.
1875.	The Flight into Egypt . . .	W. Graham, Esq.
1876.	Judith with the Head of Holofernes .	Colonel Markham.
	Dido	"
1878.	A Triumphal Procession . . .	Hugh Owen, Esq.
1880.	The Virgin and Child . . .	Charles Butler, Esq.
1881.	A Pietà	Sir William N. Abdy, Bart.





THE PRINCIPAL WORKS OF FRANCIA.

BERLIN. *Museum.*

Madonna and Child, with SS. Geminiano, Bernard, Dorothea, Catharine, Jerome, and Louis of France. FRANCIA AURIFABER BONOÑ, 1502 (*painted for Santa Cecilia, Modena*).

Holy Family (*early work*) BARTHOLOMEI SUM (PTU) BIANCHINI
MAXIMA MATROM HIC VIVIT MANIBUS FRANCIA PICTA TUIS.

BOLOGNA. *Pinacoteca.*

78. Madonna and Child, with SS. John the Baptist, Monica, Augustin, Francis, Proculus and Sebastian and an Angel (*with portrait of Bartolommeo Felicini, for whom it was painted, OPUS FRANCIE AURIFICIS, MCCCCLXXXX (IV P)*).

80. Madonna and Child, with SS. John the Baptist, Augustin, Jerome, and Stephan, and an angel (*painted for the Manzuoli*).

81. The Infant Christ adored by the Virgin, SS. Joseph, Augustin, and Francis, the donor and two angels. (*Painted for Antonio Galeazzo Bentivoglio in 1499.*)

82. Birth; Infancy; Death of Christ. (*A predella.*)

83. Pietà.

[*These five were formerly in Santa Maria della Misericordia, Bologna.*]

371. Annunciation, with SS. George, Bernardino of Siena, Francis of Assisi, and John the Evangelist. FRANCIA AURIFEX PINXIT, MCCCC.

BOLOGNA. 372. Madonna and Child, with SS. John the Baptist, Paul, and Francis of Assisi.

373. Crucifixion, with the Madonna, the Magdalen, St. Jerome, and St. John the Evangelist. OPUS FRANCIE AURIF.

[*These three were formerly in the SS. Annunziata, Bologna.*]

79. Annunciation, with SS. John the Baptist and Jerome.

[*Formerly in the Oratorio of San Girolamo di Miramonte Bologna.*]

San Giacomo Maggiore.

Madonna, with Saints and Angels. JOHANNI BENTIVOGLIO II. FRANCIA AURIFEX PINXIT (in 1499). [*In the Bentivoglio Chapel.*]

Marriage; and Burial of St. Cecilia, fresco 1509. [*In the Oratory of Santa Cecilia.*]

San Martino Maggiore.

Madonna and Child, with SS. Roch, Sebastian, Bernardino, and Anthony of Padua. FRANCIA AURIFEX P.

SS. Vitale ed Agricola.

Angels playing musical instruments (round an older picture of the Madonna).

Casa Ercolani.

God the Father, 1514.

CESENA. *Pinacoteca.*

Presentation. FRANCIA AURIFEX.

DRESDEN. *Gallery.*

Adoration of the Kings (*a predella*).

Madonna and Child, with the bird, and St. John the Baptist.

Baptism of Christ. FRANCIA AURIFEX BON. F. M. V. VIII. (1509).

FERRARA. *Cathedral.*

Coronation of the Virgin, with SS. George, Stephen, Bartholomew, John the Baptist, Peter, Augustin and Paul, Catherine, and another female Saint. (*The altar-piece "of all the Saints."*)

FLORENCE. *Uffizi.*

Portrait of Evangelista Scappi. SO. VANGELISTA SCARPI.

FORLÌ. *Pinacoteca.*

Adoration of the Child (*from the Palazzo Zambeccari, Bologna*).

FRANKFORT. *Stüdel.*

Portrait of a young man.

HAMPTON COURT.

Baptism of Christ. FRANZIA AURIFEX BON. (*replica of the Dresden Gallery picture*).

LONDON. *National Gallery.*

The Virgin with the Infant Christ and St. Anne, enthroned, surrounded by SS. John the Baptist, Sebastian, Paul, Lawrence and Romualdo (*with the annexed signature*).

FRANZIA · AURIFEX · BONONIENSIS · P.

The Virgin and two angels weeping over the dead body of Christ (*lunette of the above*).

[*These two pictures, formerly an altar-piece, were originally in the Buonvisi Chapel in San Frediano, at Lucca.*]

The Virgin and Child with two Saints.

Dudley House.

Virgin and Child with St. Joseph. JACOBUS CAMBARUS BONON. PER FRANCIAM AURIFABRUM HOC OPUS FIERI CURAVIT, 1495.

Virgin and Child.

LUCCA. *San Frediano.*

The Virgin in glory blessed by Christ, with SS. Anselm, Augustin, Anthony, and David and Solomon.

Scenes from the History of the Augustine order (*predella*).

Galleria Mansi da San Pellegrino.

Madonna and Child.

MADRID. *Duke of Fernan Nunez.*

St. Sebastian.

MILAN. *Brera.*

Annunciation.

Casa Pertusati.

Madonna and Saints. 1511.

MUNICH. *Pinakothek.*

Madonna of the Rose-garden. FRANCIA AURIFEX BONO.
(*A copy is in the Berlin Museum, and another in the
Pinacoteca, Bologna.*)

Madonna and Child (who holds a bird), with two angels.

PARIS. *Louvre.*

The Nativity.

Christ on the Cross, with Job, the Virgin, and St. John.
FRANCIA AURIFABER (*formerly in San Giobbe, Bologna.*)

PARMA. *Accademia.*

Deposition. FRANCIA AURIFEX BONON. F.

Madonna and Child, St. John the Baptist, and SS. Joseph,
Benedict, Scolastica, and Placida. FRANCIA AURIFEX
BONONIENSIS, F. MDXV.

Madonna with the little St. John.

ROME. *Palazzo Borghese.*

St. Stephen. VINCENTII DESIDERII VOTUM FRÆCLÆ
EXPRESSUM MANU (*early work*).

Madonna and Child.

ST. PETERSBURG. *Hermitage.*

Madonna and Child (*in the background the "Resurrection"
and "Transfiguration"*). F. FRANCIA.

Madonna and Child, with St. Jerome, St. Lawrence, and
two angels. D.S. LUDOVICUS DE CALCINA. DECRETORÛ
DOCTOR CANONICUS. S.P. BON. REDIFICATOR AUCTORQ.
DOMUS ET RESTAURATOR HUIUS ECCLISÆ FECIT FIERI. P.
ME FRANCIAM AURIFICĒ BONON. ANO. MCCCC.

TURIN. *Museum.*

Pietà, with the Virgin, the Magdalen, the Evangelist, and a
Saint. F. FRANCIA AURIFEX BONONIENSIS F. MDXV.

VIENNA. *Belvedere.*

Madonna and Child, with SS. John the Baptist, Francis,
and Catherine (*repainted*).

Academy.

Madonna and Child, with Saints (*repainted, and doubtful*).

Liechtenstein Gallery.

Portrait of a Bolognese nobleman (*formerly ascribed to
Raphael*).

PAINTINGS BY FRANCIA IN PRIVATE COLLECTIONS IN ENGLAND EXHIBITED AT VARIOUS TIMES.

AT THE BRITISH INSTITUTION (1816—1852).

Date.	Subject.	Owner.
1843.	Madonna and Child, with St. Jerome and St. Francis	Hon. T. Frankland Lewis.
1852.	Baptism of our Saviour	Right Hon. H. Labouchere, M.P.
1853.	A Man's Head	John Freeborn, Esq.
1861.	Virgin and Child with Angels	W. F. Maitland, Esq.
1863.	Portrait of a Young Man	J. C. Robinson, Esq.

AT THE MANCHESTER ART TREASURES EXHIBITION, 1857.

Cat. No.	Subject.	Owner.
81.	The Baptism of Christ	Right Hon. H. Labouchere.
108.	The Madonnâ and Child, with St. Joseph	Lord Ward.
124.	Madonna and Child	Daniel Lee, Esq.
127.	Virgin and Child	Lord Northwick.
132.	The Baptism	The Queen (Hampton Court).
146.	St. Roch	Sir W. R. Farquhar, Bart.

AT THE LEEDS ART TREASURES EXHIBITION, 1868.

Cat. No.	Subject.	Owner.
60.	Virgin and Child. Triptych	J. W. Faulkner, Esq.
80.	Head of a Saint	Alexander Barker, Esq.
83.	Virgin and Child, with Saints Six- tus and Laurence	Wolsey Moreau, Esq.
86.	Saint	Alexander Barker, Esq.
248.	Holy Family	The Right Hon. the Speaker.

AT THE "EXHIBITION OF THE WORKS OF THE OLD MASTERS."

Date.	Subject.	Owner.
1871.	The Virgin and Child	Earl of Dudley.
1873.	The Virgin and Child	J. F. Jesse, Esq.
1876.	The Virgin and Child—rocky land- scape in distance	Thomas Sheffield, Esq.
1879.	St. Francis	William Graham, Esq.
1881.	Portrait of the Painter	Sir William N. Abdy, Bart.
	Portrait of Giovanni Bentivoglio, of Bologna	" "

CHRONOLOGY

OF MANTEGNA.

1431. Born in the neighbourhood of Padua. (*Page 3.*)
1441. Entered on the register of Paduan painters as the adopted son of his master Squarcione. (*P. 3.*)
1448. Painted the altar-piece for Santa Sofia of Padua. (*P. 3.*)
1452. Painted the fresco over the portal of Sant' Antonio. (*P. 3.*)
- 1452-58. Painted the frescoes of the Eremitani Church, and married Niccolosia Bellini. (*Pp. 3-11.*)
1454. Painted the altar-piece for Santa Giustina, Padua. (*P. 14.*)
1456. Entered into correspondence with Lodovico Gonzaga. (*P. 14.*)
- 1457-59. Painted the altar-piece of San Zeno at Verona. (*P. 15.*)
1459. Settled at Mantua with his family. (*P. 17.*)
1466. Visited Florence. (*P. 22.*)
1472. Visited Cardinal Francesco Gonzaga at Bologna. (*P. 22.*)
- „ Received a grant of land at Buscoido. (*P. 22.*)
- 1470-1474. Painted the frescoes of the Camera degli Sposi. (*P. 25-28.*)
1473. Received a grant of land in Mantua upon which he built his house. (*P. 29.*)
1481. Painted at Marmirolo. (*P. 30.*)
1483. Received a visit from Lorenzo de' Medici. (*P. 30.*)
1485. Painted a Madonna for the Duchess of Ferrara. (*P. 32.*)
- 1485-1488. Painted the first pieces of the "Triumphs." (*P. 32.*)
- 1488-1490. Painted the frescoes of the Belvedere Chapel of the Vatican for Innocent VIII. (*P. 32.*)
- „ Painted the Madonna and Child of the Uffizi for Lorenzo de' Medici. (*P. 34.*)
1490. Left Rome and returned to Mantua, Sept. 6. (*P. 34.*)
- 1490-92. Worked at the "Triumphs of Julius Cæsar" and completed the series. (*P. 39.*)
1492. Received a fresh grant of land from Francesco Gonzaga, Feb. 4. (*P. 43.*)
1494. Furnished his house in the parish of S. Sebastian. (*P. 43.*)
- 1495-96. Painted the Madonna della Vittoria. (*P. 47.*)
- 1496-97. Painted an altar-piece for Santa Maria in Organo at Verona, now in Casa Trivulzi, Milan. (*P. 48.*)
1499. Designed a monument to Virgil. (*P. 49.*)
1499. Marriage of his daughter Taddea to Viano Vianesi. (*P. 43.*)

1504. Made his first will, March 1. (*P. 51.*)
 „ Entered into a contract with the Canons of Sant' Andrea by which he obtained possession of a chapel in that church, Aug. 11. (*P. 51.*)
 „ Sold his house in Mantua. (*P. 51.*)
 1505. Disgrace and banishment of his son Francesco. (*P. 51.*)
 „ Painted the St. Sebastian of the Scarpa gallery, and the Triumph of Scipio for Francesco Cornaro. (*P. 52.*)
 „ Bought a house in the Contrada Unicornio. (*P. 53.*)
 1506. Altered his will in favour of Gian' Andrea, his illegitimate son, Jan. 24. (*P. 51.*)
 „ Painted the Masque of Comus for Isabella Gonzaga. (*P. 53.*)
 „ Sold his bust of Faustina to Isabella's agent, Aug. 1. (*P. 54.*)
 „ Died at Mantua, Sept. 13. (*P. 54.*)

OF FRANCIA.

1450. Born at Bologna. (*P. 75.*)
 1482. Entered the Goldsmiths' Guild. (*P. 76.*)
 1483. Elected steward of the Guild. (*P. 76.*)
 1485. Birth of his son Giacomo. (*P. 76.*)
 1487. Birth of his son Giulio. (*P. 76.*)
 1489. Elected steward of the Goldsmiths' Guild a second time. (*P. 76.*)
 1490. Painted his first altar-piece for Bartolommeo Felicini. (*P. 79.*)
 1495. Painted a Madonna and Child for Jacopo Gambaro. (*P. 81.*)
 1499. Painted altar-pieces for the Bentivoglio Chapel and Church of the Misericordia. (*P. 81.*)
 1500. Painted altar-pieces for the Church of the Annunziata, and for San Lorenzo. (*Pp. 84, 85.*)
 1502. Painted Madonna and Saints for the Friars dell' Osservanza at Modena. (*P. 100.*)
 1505—1506. Painted frescoes of the Chapel of St. Cecilia. (*P. 94.*)
 1507. Expulsion of the Bentivogli. (*P. 97.*)
 1508. Coined money for Pope Julius II. (*P. 97.*)
 „ Sent his portrait to Raphael in Rome, Sept. (*P. 97.*)
 1509. Painted the Baptism of Christ (now in the Dresden Gallery). (*P. 99.*)
 1511. Elected one of the six Gonfalonieri of the People. (*P. 102.*)
 1512. Elected steward of the Guild. (*P. 103.*)
 1514. Elected steward of the four Guilds. (*P. 103.*)
 1515. Painted Sanvitale altar-piece at Parma, and Pietà at Turin. (*P. 104.*)
 1516. Raphael sent his St. Cecilia to Bologna. (*P. 105.*)
 1517. (New style, 1518). Died, Jan. 5. (*P. 106.*)

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INDEX.

TO MANTEGNA.

	PAGE		PAGE
Aldobrandini	22	Faustina, Mantegna's	53, 54, 56
Aliprandi, quarrel with	23	Feliciano	13
„ exchanged land with	43	Finiguerra	35
Altichieri of Verona	2		
Andrea, Zoon	23, 35	Gian' Andrea	43, 50, 51
Ansuino of Forli	6	Giotto	1
Ariosto	59	Giusto of Florence	2
Avanzo, Jacopo d'	2	Gonzaga, Federigo	30, 31
		Gonzaga, Francesco	22
Barbaro, Daniele	8	Gonzaga, Francesco II.	32, 33, 43
Bellini, the	8, 9, 10, 12, 17	Gonzaga, Lodovico	14, 15, 17, 21, 25, 26, 29, 30
Bono of Ferrara	5	Gonzaga, Sigismondo	51
Bossi, Matteo	13, 18		
Bust of Mantegna	7	Influence of Mantegna on—	
		Bellini, the	57
Calandra	54	Bonsignori	57
Camera degli Sposi	25—28	Buonconsiglio	57
Campagnola	35	Caroto	57
Caracalla, Baths of	13	Correggio	58
Cerdo, Vitruvius	13	Costa	57
		Dürer	59
Donatello	9, 12, 14	Forli, Melozzo da	58
Drawings—		Francia	58
Calumny of Apelles	45	Holbein	59
Chalice, Design for	46	Libri, Girolamo dai	57
Entombment	45	Grandi, Ercole	57
Hercules killing the Lion	45	Leonardo	58, 60
Judgment of Solomon	45	Liberale	57
Judith	45, 46	Michelangelo	58, 61
Mars, Diana and Venus	45	Montagna	57
Sacrifice	45, 46	Morone	57
Dürer	36, 55	Raphael	58, 60
Dwarfs at Mantua	26	Rubens	59
		Tura, Cosimio	57
Engravings—		Vivarini, Luigi	57
Battle of the Sea-Gods	35, 45, 59	Innocent VIII.	32, 33
Dancing Muses of the Parnassus	35		
Descent from the Cross	36	Julius II.	54
Entombment	36, 59, 62		
Hercules and Antæus	36, 45	Lomazzo	8
Portraits of Lodovico and Barbara	36	Lorenzo di Pavia	55
Gonzaga	36		
St. Andrew, St. Longinus and the	36	Mantegna, Andrea (See Chronology p. 119)	
Risen Christ	36	Mantegna, Francesco	51, 57
St. Sebastian	36	Mantegna, Lodovico	32, 43, 51
Scourging of Christ	34	Mantegna, Niccolosia	43, 51
Triumph	35, 40	Mantegna, Taddea	43
Virgin of the Grotto	18, 35	Mantua, sack of	24
Eremitani Frescoes	4—11	Medici, Lorenzo de', visits Mantegna	30
Este, Isabella d'	31, 34		
Fancelli	14		

Melozzo da Forlì	PAGE 28
Mocetto	35
Niccolosia	43, 51
Norsa	47

Paintings—

<i>Adoration of the Magi, of the</i>	
<i>Uffizi</i>	18
<i>" " of the</i>	
<i>Vatican</i>	32
<i>Autumn</i>	19
<i>Baptism of Christ</i>	32
<i>Birth of Christ</i>	32
<i>Burial of St. Christopher</i>	10
<i>Christ on the Mount of Olives</i>	16
<i>Cristo in Scurto</i>	55
<i>Comus</i>	53
<i>Dead Christ</i>	19
<i>Death of the Virgin</i>	19
<i>Descent of Christ into Limbo</i>	34
<i>Execution of St. James</i>	9
<i>Glorified Madonna, of Milan</i>	48
<i>History of St. James and St. Christopher</i>	4—11
<i>Lodovico Gonzaga and his son, Francesco</i>	26
<i>Lodovico Gonzaga and his wife</i>	25
<i>Madonna, of Bergamo</i>	49
<i>" holding the child on a parapet</i>	18
<i>Madonna, of the Dresden Gallery</i>	32
<i>" of San Zeno</i>	15, 16
<i>Madonna della Vittoria</i>	46, 47, 48
<i>Man of Sorrows</i>	34
<i>Martyrdom of St. Christopher</i>	10
<i>Parnassus</i>	44, 48

Paintings—

<i>Pietà</i>	PAGE 20
<i>Portrait of an Ecclesiastic</i>	18
<i>Rubens's copy of the Triumphs</i>	41
<i>SS. Anthony and Bernardino</i>	3
<i>St. Euphemia</i>	14
<i>St. George</i>	19
<i>St. James baptizing Converts</i>	6
<i>" before Herod</i>	7
<i>" blessing a kneeling disciple</i>	7
<i>St. Luke</i>	14
<i>St. Sebastian</i>	19
<i>" of La Motta</i>	52, 55
<i>Summer</i>	19
<i>Triumphs of Julius Cæsar</i>	32, 33, 38, 43, 46, 60
<i>Triumph of Scipio</i>	52, 55
<i>Virgin, of the National Gallery</i>	48
<i>" of the Uffizi</i>	31, 34
<i>Wisdom Victorious over the Vices</i>	44
<i>Pannonio</i>	13
<i>Pizzolo, Niccolò</i>	5, 6, 18
<i>Santa Sofia, altar-piece for</i>	3
<i>Santi, Giovanni</i>	28
<i>Sperandio's Bust of Mantegna</i>	56
<i>Squarcione</i>	2, 8, 14
<i>Uccelli</i>	8, 9, 12
<i>Vianesi</i>	43
<i>Virgil, Monument to</i>	49
<i>Zizim</i>	33
<i>Zoppo, Marco</i>	6

TO FRANCIA.

Angelico, Fra	107, 108
Aspertini	94, 95, 104
Avanzi, Jacopo degli	67, 68
Avanzo Jacopo d'	68
Bagnacavallo	103
Bentivoglio, Antonio Galeazzo	
<i>" Giovanni II.</i>	73, 76, 81
Bentivogli driven from Bologna	97
Bentivogli return to Bologna	102
Bernardino da Siena	70
Carracci, the	69, 82, 106
Casio	80, 83

Caterina	76
Chiodarolo	94, 95
Clement VIII.	67
Cossa, Francesco	73
Costa	73, 77, 78, 79, 94, 95
Credi, Lorenzo di	83
Crevalcore	80
Cristofano	70
Dalmasii, Lippo	66
Domenichino	106

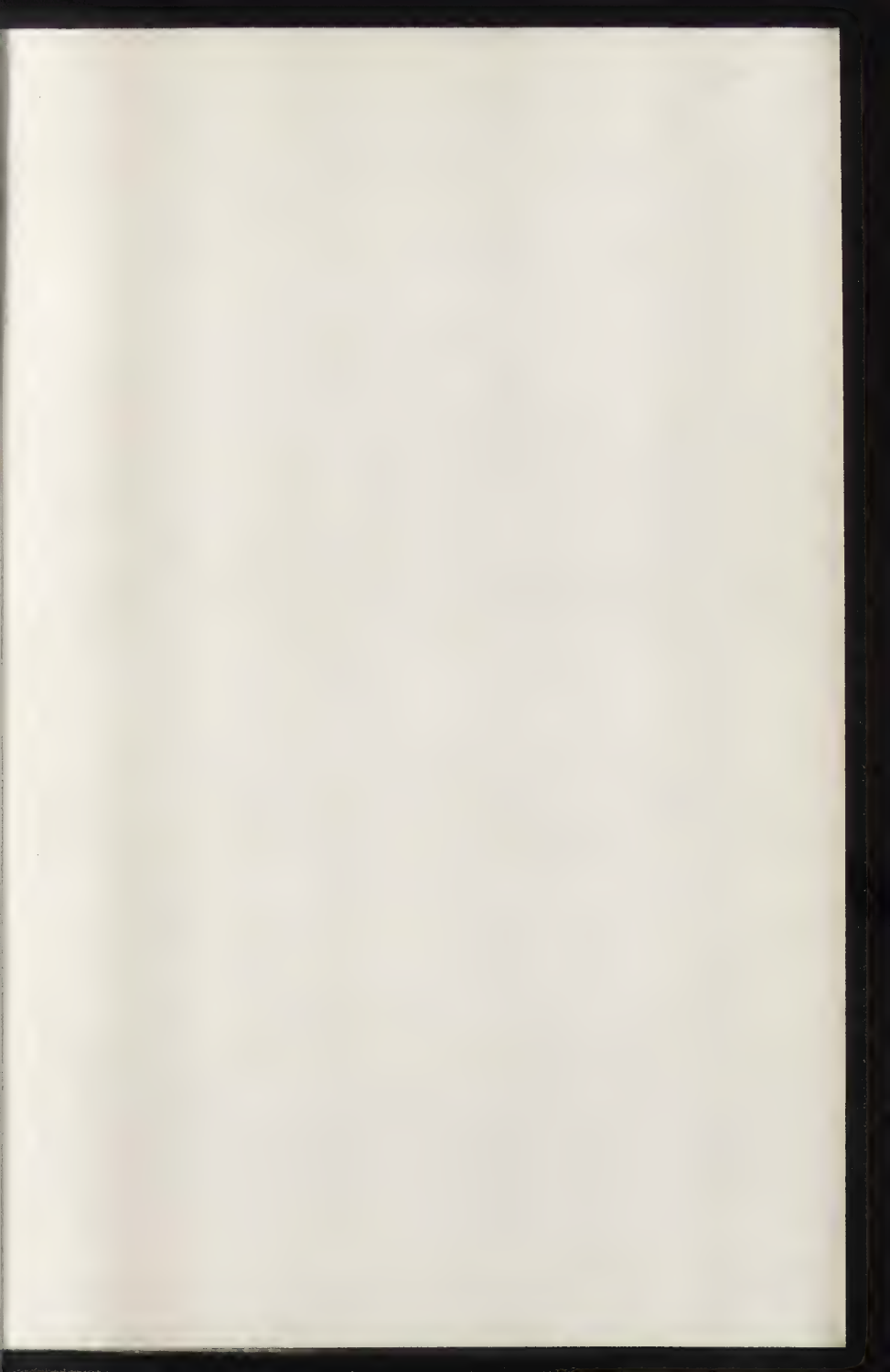
Drawings—

<i>Greek Youths</i>	93
<i>Judgment of Paris</i>	93

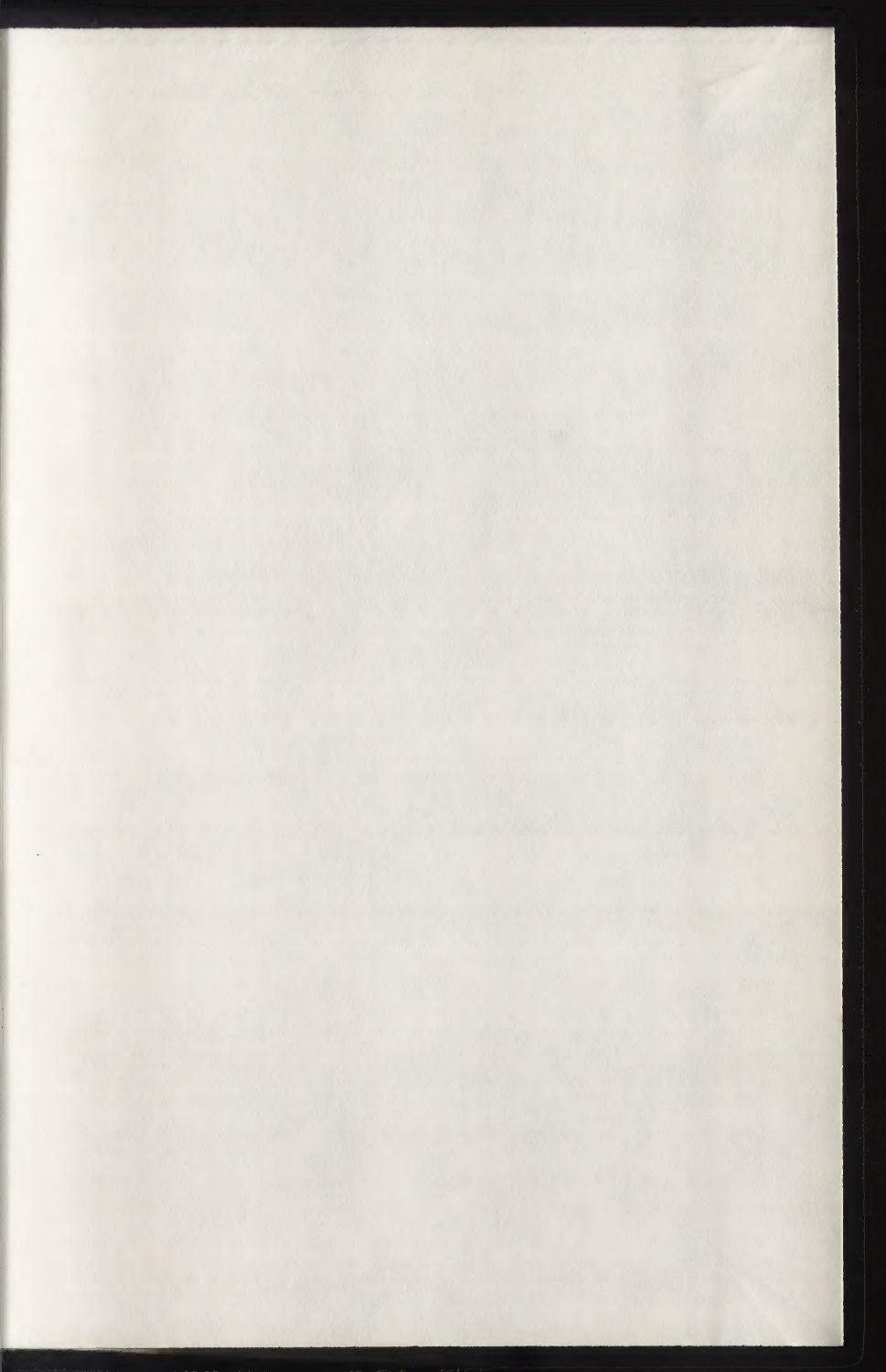
	PAGE		PAGE
Franco Bolognese	65	Paintings—	
Felicioni	80, 83	<i>Madonna</i> , Vienna	100
Francia (<i>See</i> Chronology, p. 120)		" Berlin	100
Galassi	68, 71, 72	" St. Petersburg	84
Gambara	81	" San Martino	84
Gaston de Foix	102	" Munich	81
Grandi, Ercole	73	" of 1490	79
" Ercole II.	104	" of 1511	104
Gubbio, Oderisio da	65	<i>Madonna of the Rose Garden</i>	100
Guido of Bologna	65	<i>Marriage of Cecilia and Valerian</i>	95
Guido Reni.	106	<i>Nativity</i> , of Bologna	82
Imola, Innocenza da	103	" of Forlì	92
Julius II.	97	<i>Pietà</i> , at Bologna	81
Lambertini	72	" of the National Gallery	89, 90
Landscape	84	" Turin Gallery	104
Lianori	72	<i>Portrait of Bartolommeo Bianchini</i>	79
Mantegna	72, 77	" <i>Evangelista Scappi</i>	99
Marchesi	104	" <i>a Bolognese Noble</i>	99
Mezzaratta, Frescoes of the	68, 69	<i>Presentation</i> , of Cesena	92
Michelangelo	69	<i>St. Stephen</i>	78
Nadi	94	<i>Virgin enthroned with Saints</i> , of National Gallery	91
Niello work	77	Paxes, by Francia	77
Paintings—		Perugino	80, 83
<i>Adoration of the Magi</i> , of the Brera	84	Pietro della Francesca	72
" at Dresden	100	Raibolini, Francesco (<i>See</i> Chronology p. 120)	
<i>Annunciation</i> , of the Annunziata	85	Raibolini, Giacomo	94, 95, 76, 103
" Bologna Gallery	100	" Giulio	76, 103
" of the Brera	81	Raimondi	93
<i>Baptism of Christ</i> , Dresden	99	Raphael, Francia's friendship for	86
" Hampton Court	100	Raphael visits Bologna	87
<i>Burial of St. Cecilia</i>	95, 96	" and Francia exchange pictures	88
<i>Coronation of the Virgin</i> , at Lucca	91	" Sonnet to	88
" at Ferrara	92	" influence of	95
<i>Crucifixion</i> , of the Louvre	81	" letter of	97
<i>Deposition</i> , Parma	89, 104	" sends his altar-piece to Francia	105
<i>Dispute of Philosophers</i>	92	St. Cecilia, Frescoes in Oratory of	94, 95
<i>God the Father</i>	104	Simone dai Crocifissi	67, 68, 71
<i>Holy Family</i> , of Berlin	79	Tamaroccio	94, 95
" of Dudley House	81	Ursone	65
<i>Judith</i>	92	Ventura	65
<i>Lucrezia</i>	88, 93	Vigri, Santa Catarina	72
<i>Madonna</i> , of the Annunziata	85	Vitale	66, 70
" Bentivoglio	82	Viti, Timoteo	87
" Manzuoli	82	Zoppo, Marco	73, 77, 78
" Parma Gallery	104		
" Dresden	100		
" National Gallery	100		

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